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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE HISTORICAL INDIVIDUALITY
OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (MOVEMENT)

By

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(A.B., Dickinson College, 1934)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
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Master of Arts
1936

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INTRODUCTION.

In its origin and development Christianity was unique. It had its birth in an insignificant corner of the Roman Empire. Its Founder was a man who was crucified by the religious authorities of His nation. During His lifetime He wrote nothing and founded no organization. Jesus merely went about doing good among His fellow countrymen, scattering His words like seeds in the dry wind as He went. Eleven men, who were Christ's personal followers during His active ministry, took up the work after His departure from the earth. Ahead of them lay the vast Roman Empire. It stood for temporal power as opposed to the spiritual supremacy for which they stood. A vast system of polytheistic religions of long standing looked ominously down upon the young but living faith to which they bore witness. The Hellenistic culture of the Empire was so strong that any new development within its reach seemed destined to have its little day and cease to be.

The result, however, was the very opposite. The new faith persisted and grew in the face of terrific opposition. Gradually it melted the iron hand of Rome. Slowly, but surely, it replaced the polytheistic systems of the heathen world. Into the heart of Greek speculation came the new faith with the bold announcement of a new and significant discovery. This discovery was the thing that made the

new faith unique and individual. It was this which accounts for the power and expansion of the Christian faith. To show how the new faith expressed its individuality in its origin and in the first century and a half of its development is the problem of this paper.

Chapter I is introductory and forms a necessary background for that which follows in the remaining six chapters.

I have endeavored to follow closely the outline of events as recorded in the New Testament. Certainly the books of the New Testament have a right to the first place in any consideration of the beginning of Christianity. Secondary sources have been used to supplement this original source.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORLD INTO WHICH CHRISTIANITY CAME.

1. Unity in the Roman Empire.

One of the most significant factors conducive to the spread of Christianity in the first and second centuries was the high degree of unity in the Roman Empire. This unity was achieved, partly as a result of advantageous geographical positions, but chiefly through the genius of the Roman rulers. Rome was centrally located in the Mediterranean world. The Mediterranean was the sea upon which the ships of all nations sailed. Around this large body of water were grouped all the cultivated nations. The Italian peninsula extended far out into the sea. In the middle of the peninsula was Rome. Her geographical location fitted her to be the central point from which to control the expansive stretch of the Empire.

When Augustus became Emperor he erected a golden milestone in the Forum at Rome. It was a symbol to the world that here was its center. Out of this city and in all directions stretched the well built Roman roads. They extended to the boundaries of the Empire. Over these roads marched Rome's conquering legions. Commerce moved along these busy lines. Students traveled these roads in the pursuit of learning. Proconsuls and Praetors used them to administer law and justice to the provinces.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST EXHIBITION OF THE

1. THE FIRST EXHIBITION OF THE

One of the most significant features of the
history of Christianity in the first and second centuries
was the first century of Christianity. This
century was marked by a series of events
which shaped the future of the Christian Church.
The first century of Christianity was marked by
the birth of Jesus Christ, the life and teachings
of Jesus Christ, the death and resurrection of
Jesus Christ, and the spread of the Christian
faith. The first century of Christianity was
marked by the birth of Jesus Christ, the life
and teachings of Jesus Christ, the death and
resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the spread
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the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and
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Christ, the death and resurrection of Jesus
Christ, and the spread of the Christian faith.

Christian missionaries used these roads to carry the Gospel message to all parts of the heathen world. These highways were like a network of cords binding the outlying districts with their center, Rome.

Another thing making for unity was the universality of the Latin and Greek languages. When the Roman civilization came into contact with the Greek civilization a new culture grew up which we call the Graeco-Roman culture. Latin remained the popular language of the West and was understood in the East as the speech of the dominant race. Yet Greek surpassed Latin in approaching the rank of a universal language. "Whoever spoke it", writes Uhlhorn, "could count upon being able to make himself understood everywhere in the East and in the West". (1)

The Common Law which Rome gave to the world was also a bond of union in the Empire. It made for uniformity in social life.

These factors tended to produce a universalism in the Roman Empire which was unknown before this time. Different nationalities lost their distinctiveness under the pressure of dominance by the Roman State. This was true not only of the conquered nations; Rome itself lost some of its former distinctiveness. It was a give-and-take relationship in which the conquerors were involved as well as the conquered.

(1) Uhlhorn - Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism - p.20.

Old Roman families died out and others from the provinces took their places. The right of Roman citizenship was extended to larger and larger numbers and the distinction between Roman and non-Roman became less pointed. Before long the provinces supplied some of the Emperors.

Culture tended to become universal. There was a new interest in learning. Schools were opened which afforded opportunities to multitudes of students. Books were comparatively cheap and this made for a wider circulation. Many cities established libraries to facilitate the diffusion of knowledge.

With this broadening culture went an increase of travel. People took journeys to distant points in the Empire and were guided by specially prepared guide-books designating the temples, statues, and other places of interest. People who had not been to either Athens or Alexandria were hardly considered persons of education.

This whole development tended toward a universalism which prepared the way for the entrance of Christianity. Before this time the thought of an international religion would have been inconceivable. The modification of the distinctions between nations under the influence of the Roman State was at least a step in the direction of a world-view not out of harmony with the Christian idea of a Kingdom of God embracing all nations. Such a thing would have been

unintelligible to a Greek or a Roman before the development of the Empire. Whatever tended to melt down the prejudices of nation, clan, or creed and put in their place more liberal sentiments, opened a path for the Gospel.

The Empire stretched from the Atlantic to the Euphrates, a distance of more than three thousand miles. It was bounded on the north by the Danube and on the south by the cataracts of the Nile and the African desert. An exact estimate of the entire population of the empire is not possible. Fisher states that it was "somewhere from eighty to one hundred and twenty millions"(2) The important thing is that Rome brought into one political system all the civilized nations of the world. "Other empires have exceeded this in territory and in population", writes Uhlhorn, "but there has never been a second empire in the whole course of history which so united in itself all the cultivated nations of its time".(3) This political unity of the Roman Empire conditioned the rise of a catholic or universal Church. In this respect, the Empire was not a tyranny or a curse to mankind, but a forward movement and a blessing.

2.The Decline of Religion.

The outward appearance of this vast Roman Empire gave

(2)Fisher - Beginnings of Christianity -p.43.

(3)Uhlhorn - Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism-p.14.

the impression of strength and prosperity. Inwardly, However, there was decay and dissolution. The times called for a "savior, a new, divine principle of life.... The empire was a giant body, without a living soul". (4) It needed a new religion which could give life to its decaying form.

This does not mean that the people in the empire were irreligious. In fact there were signs that they were very religious. When Paul visited Athens he was impressed by the religious life of the Athenians. "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious". (5) Paul might have said the same thing in almost any part of the empire. Each nation had a host of gods and goddesses. With the gods went numerous temples and holy places. A large variety of rites and ceremonies were used in worship. It would be an unjustifiable reproach to call the heathen world irreligious. On the contrary, Christians often appeared irreligious in comparison with the religious life of the heathen world because they had no religious ceremonies comparable to those to which the latter were accustomed.

There was at first no outward manifestation of the decline of Paganism. The altars in the temples were frequented by suppliants. The oracles were consulted. Feasts and sacrifices were celebrated with great pomp. One can see how

(4) Schaff - History of the Apostolic Church. p.157.

(5) Acts 17:22.

freely sacrifices were made when he realizes that one hundred thousand animals were slain in sacrifice over a period of three months in Rome alone when Caligula was made Emperor.

Religion and the Roman State went hand in hand. In Rome, the State was everything. Religion was therefore intricately interwoven with public life. Augustus once made a decree that every senator, before taking his place, should go to the altar of the deity in whose temple the assembly was held, and offer a libation and strew incense. The union of State and religion reached a climax in Emperor worship. After the death of Caesar an altar was erected to him and people began to pay him divine honor. As time went on, the Romans did not wait until after the death of an Emperor to deify him. The process was begun during the life-time of the Emperor. Altars and temples were dedicated to Augustus before his death.

But, to the close observer, there were signs that religion was losing its power and influence in the Empire. First among these was the mingling of deities. Romans did not deprive the conquered nations of their religions. At the same time, the Roman armies took the Roman gods with them into the provinces. While they did not demand that the subjects in the provinces dispense with their local deities, they did require that friendly recognition be given to the deities of Rome. The necessity for this is appar-

ent because the official religion of Rome culminated in the divine homage paid the emperor. Thus there was a strange medley of local and Roman deities. But the process worked both ways. The gods in the provinces made their way to Rome where they were received despite the fact that Rome at first rejected foreign rites. This fusion of deities "went on uninterruptedly to its completion. As all nationalities dissolved and became fused in one mass, so there was dissolution of religions. A religious chaos unparalleled in history took the place of the national religions in order that out of this chaos a new world might be created". (6)

A second thing which hastened the decline of religion was unbelief among the higher classes. It grew out of Greek culture and philosophy. Cato and Caesar openly confessed their skepticism to the senate. Lucretius believed that the gods were the outgrowth of fear and that they did the human race more harm than good. He thought of the gods as gigantic monsters trampling the human race in the dust. Epicurus defied the gods. Pliny coolly affirmed his belief that the existence of gods was a myth. To him nature was God and the Mother of all things. The inevitable conclusion to which such reasoning brought him is expressed in these words: "There is nothing certain save that nothing is certain, and there is no more wretched and yet arrogant being than man. The

(6) Uhlhorn - Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism. p.39.

best thing which has been given to man amid the many torments of this life is, that he can take his own life". (7) A striking example of unbelief is to be found in the person of Petronius, one of Nero's courtiers. He decided to take his own life when it was discovered that he was involved in the Pisonian conspiracy. He punctured his veins and while the blood was flowing out he conversed frivolously with his friends. He listened to ludicrous poems. When something especially laughable was read he had his veins tied up again so that he might thoroughly enjoy it.

The feeling of unbelief was more or less prevalent among the educated class of people. The gods of the old religions had lost their appeal. There was nothing to take their place but sheer Atheism and Nihilism. Many, who did not personally believe in the gods, found it useful to have other people believe in them since it tended toward conservatism. They therefore participated hypocritically in the official rites. But this was an unhealthy condition which was bound to come to light at some time and bring with it devastating results.

The worship of the Emperor, while it tended to strengthen heathenism by giving it a common center, also tended to destroy religion for the very obvious reason that men saw too plainly what the gods were like to whom they erected

(7) Uhlhorn - Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism. p.48.

temples and paid divine homage. Think of the impression people would get of their Emperor-god when they visited Rome and saw the devilish tricks of the ignoble Nero.

One of the chief troubles with the religion of the old world was its stress upon the present life without any thought of the future. This world was to be enjoyed. To seek pleasure in this life was a worthy pursuit. Epicurus was its chief advocate. He appealed to people everywhere to enjoy the things of this life. A more dismal system of thought was that represented by the Stoics. They advocated that true happiness was to be found by calmly accepting what fate decrees for you and allowing nothing to disturb your inner tranquility. Whatever conceptions of immortality the pagan world possessed did not alter the situation, for the dead were thought of as ever turning toward this life. For this reason many families buried their dead along streets which were busy with travelers. Along the Appian Way in Rome are rows of tombs. In this way the dead were supposed to remain connected with the living. Standing as we do at this vantage point in the sweep of history, we know that any religion or system which is concerned only with the present is headed for a fall. It is necessary to link this life up with the next. The eternal view must be involved in any program of action or doctrine of belief if it is to survive the vicissitudes of time. The religion

of the Romans lacked this important element.

A corollary to this was the attention paid to the external rather than the internal aspects of human nature. It was the times of ignorance about which Paul spoke. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." (8) The high value which Jesus placed upon the worth of the human soul was as yet foreign to their thinking. Jesus made it plain that it was a distinct loss if a man gained the whole world and lost his own soul in the process. But, to the Romans, the world was everything. They loved its triumphs, its pomps, and its shows. They rejoiced in appearances, in large processions and the external grandeur of the visible world. But Christianity fastened the attention of men upon their own inner lives. "The great transformation which now took place was the turning from what is without to what is within, from this life to the life to come." (9)

This transformation was a gradual one. Only by degrees did the Roman world come to long for redemption and the assurance of a future life. Necessary antecedents to this hope were a growing consciousness of sin and dissatisfaction with the present life. These were the inevitable results of a religion which had form but which lacked spirit. People

(8) Acts 17:30

(9) Uhlhorn - Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism. p.68

had no desire to approach the gods because they did not satisfy. The consciousness of sin found no answer in the Roman cultus. T. R. Glover says of the religions of the Empire: "They offered men and women emotions, but they scarcely touched morality. To the terrors of life, already many enough, they added crowning fears, and cramped and dwarfed the minds of men". (10)

Thus, we see that the western world was good soil for the fresh, living seeds of Christianity. The Christian missionaries from the East came with a gospel message which not only proposed to redeem men from the evils of the world but also proved its power to do so. As an answer to their longing for a future life the early Christians brought the glad tidings of a risen Lord. The thing which the people of the Empire needed most, namely, a new, divine principle of life, was the very thing the religion of Jesus had to offer.

What has been said about the condition of religion in the Roman world up to this point does not portray the whole truth. The other side of the matter is that there were periods of religious revival at different times in the history of the Empire. Such a revival took place about the close of the first century and continued with increasing power into the middle of the second century. It grew out of the philosophical development which spread over the country a little

(10) Glover - The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire. p24.

prior to this. The new religious feeling expressed itself in two ways. The first was an attempt to put life into the old religions by restoring the places of worship and by carefully observing traditional customs. This attempt was somewhat superficial and could not answer the deep religious cravings of the age. But there was a second way in which the resuscitation of religion came about. It was through the blending of religions. There was a constant interchange going on among the different religions. Mixed with this was the influence of Greek philosophy and speculation. There was a syncretism of matured Platonism, ancient mysteries, and Orientalism which represented the final form of Hellenism. As a result, the attention and interest of the people were turned toward such sublime subjects as the nature of the soul, God's relation to the world, knowledge, redemption, and eternal life. A profound change took place in the inner life which marks the highest advance of religion in the Empire apart from the advance which took place under Christianity. "Christianity", writes Harnack, "had to settle with this 'syncretism' or final form of Hellenism". (11) We shall see how the settlement was made.

3. Social Life and Morals.

In the beginning, the Roman community had a high grade of

(11) Harnack-Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries. p34

morals. People were temperate and industrious. Domestic relations were virtuous. Public life was above reproach. But gradually social demoralization set in. With the spread of Roman conquest came increased wealth and the contamination of Asiatic luxury and vice. With the influx of Greek culture came also Greek frivolity. Chastity and modesty were things of the past. The simplicity of former times was forgotten. People reveled in luxury and artificiality. Fashionable ladies protected the complexion with fine pastes and bathed in ass's milk. Slaves were trained to color eyebrows and paint the cheeks. The hair was dyed to suit the wishes of the individual. Sometimes it was entirely cut off and replaced by false hair.

Morals sank to a horribly low level. People had little regard for the marriage relation. Divorce was prevalent. Friends exchanged wives. In some instances ladies of high birth had their names enrolled on the police register of common prostitutes in order that they might engage in all forms of sexual excesses.

The Apostle Paul gives us a picture of the hideous vices which prevailed among the heathen in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans. They were "filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful,

inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful". (12) Seneca gives a picture just as dark.

"All things are full of crimes and vices"., he says. "More is perpetrated than can be removed by force. There is a struggle to see which will excel in iniquity. Daily the appetite for sin increases, the sense of shame diminishes. Casting away all respect for right and justice, lust hurries whithersoever it will. Crimes are no longer secret; they stalk before the eyes of men. Iniquity has so free a course in public, it so dominates in all hearts, that innocence is not only rare-it does not exist at all. (13)

Of course these charges are a bit rhetorical, but they reflect conditions which justified such rhetorical expressions.

Let us consider the state of morals under a few definite heads. There was much immorality connected with heathen worship. At Corinth prostitution was practiced in honor of Ayshrodite. Indecent songs and licentious revelry accompanied many of the festivals. The frightful Bacchic orgies were carried by the Greeks to Rome where iniquitous excesses were perpetrated. "Mythological stories, which were adapted to excite the baser propensities, were represented in pictures and statues, and swelled the tide of corruption which beat with ever increasing force against the ancient

(12) Romans 1:24-32.

(13) De Ira, II 8.

barriers of chastity and order". (14)

We have already pointed out that people had little respect for the marriage relationship. Marital fidelity gave away under the pressure of indecent love affairs which were accepted without question. A natural consequence was the dislike for children. Children were considered a burden rather than a blessing. Infanticide was a common practice. It was not regarded as a crime because the father had absolute power over his children according to heathen ideas. The Greeks allowed their children to perish in some desolate place when they did not regard it expedient to raise them. Aristotle approved of exposing infants when there arose the danger of excess population. Plato advised that all illegitimate children, offspring of bad characters, and children of parents advanced in years should be destroyed by exposure because they constituted a burden to the state. Abortion was practiced widely among the Romans to escape the burden of rearing the children.

The status of women was inferior to that of men. In Greece, women had very little freedom and received little education. Before marriage, the young women were kept in seclusion. After marriage they were permitted to run the household and govern the children and slaves. They lived in the same house with their husbands, but in separate apartments. When the husband was invited out to dine with

(14) Fisher - Beginnings of Christianity. p.199.

University of Wisconsin - Madison

February 1, 1961

Dear Mr. [Name]:

I have just received your letter of January 24, 1961.

I am sorry that I cannot give you a more definite answer at this time.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

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I am sure that you will understand my position.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

I am sure that you will understand my position.

a friend the wife usually stayed at home. Many of the cultured Greeks maintained intimate companionship with the hetaerae, the youthful and beautiful courtesans. The men enjoyed themselves with these females companions while the wives looked after the duties of the home. No one objected to it. It was considered proper by the best thinkers of the day.

In Rome, women enjoyed a higher position. The wife was more of a companion to her husband. At first matrimonial fidelity was rigidly observed. But it lost its power under the influence of Hellenism which swept the Roman world.

One of the outstanding elements in heathen society was slavery. In Attica, at the beginning of the fourth century, B.C., there were 20,000 free citizens, 10,000 foreign settlers, and 400,000 slaves. In Corinth these were said to be 46,000 slaves. Every Roman took pride in owning at least a few slaves. There were as many as 500 slaves in many households. It has been estimated that there were two slaves to one freeman in Rome at the beginning of the Christian era.

"A slave", writes Uhlhorn, was not regarded by the ancients as a man; he had neither free will nor any claim whatever to justice, nor any capacity for virtue". (15)

The slave was regarded as the property of his master. He

(15) Uhlhorn-Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism. pp. 31,

was bought and sold, inherited and bequeathed, like any other piece of property. He had no legal rights,. If a slave suffered an injury it was simply regarded as a deterioration of property. He could contract no marriage. His testimony was not accepted by a court of justice. If a master was murdered by a slave, all the slaves in the household came under the vengeance of Roman law which meant death.

The demoralizing effects of slavery are obvious. When a man has unlimited control over his fellow men and treats them like he would treat his beasts, the moral nature of both is lowered. It degrades the worth of personality and inspires cruelty and injustice. Slavery had injurious effects upon children because the latter were left to the care of these unfit guardians. The slaves themselves were guilty of licentiousness and almost every other vice to which they were exposed. Since they were deemed incapable of any virtue it is only natural that they became low-minded, lazy, and treacherous. The worst result of slavery was the fact that it deprived labor of all the dignity which we now attach to it. Labor was looked upon as a disgrace because it was the service of slaves. This, in turn, prevented the formation of a strong middle class which is the backbone of any civilization.

Little need be said about Roman amusements and their effect upon morals. Two things the vast population of Rome

demanded-bread and games, and the latter was no less important, than the former. The public games became an engrossing passion with the people. The Emperors themselves were partly responsible for this because it was a means of occupying the attention of the people and thereby dismissing their fears and unrest.

The Circus was a glamorous affair. The chief thing was the chariot race. The chariots and horses were owned by four companies, each having its own characteristic color. Large crowds attended these shows. In the time of Julius Caesar there were seats enough for 150,000 men. By the fourth century it had been enlarged to accommodate 385,000 people.

The gladiatorial contests aroused much interest. Large numbers of men engaged in deadly combat with each other. And all for the amusement of the spectators. During the reign of Augustus 10,000 men joined in these combats. Men not only fought with each other, but with wild beasts also. Animals were hunted in the remotest regions and brought to Rome to be used in the public shows. The games were planned to excite the spectators to the highest degree and even to bewilder them.

The demand on the part of the Roman populace for this kind of enjoyment is an expression of the fact that people could no longer find joy and happiness through the normal

channels which life offers. The complacency with which the people accepted the awful sacrifice of human life in the arena was but an indication that there was moral and spiritual decay in the Empire. The times called for a revitalizing principle of life which could save the Empire from the abyss of chaos into which it was falling. Christianity had an answer for this inner spiritual need.

4. Judaism.

We shall consider here only the external aspects of Judaism, its political significance and its relationship to the Mediterranean world. The description of the religious life of the Jews will be considered at a later time under the subject of Jesus and His relation to Judaism.

After their captivity in Babylon the Jews were at successive times subject to Persia, Egypt, and Syria. Following this Palestine became an independent state under the Maccabees. Their independence lasted a little over one hundred years; from 167-63 B.C. After the passing of the Maccabees Palestine came under the control of Rome under whose control it remained until the dissolution of the Empire.

The Jews detested foreign control. "The opinion was not rare, among the Jews, that it was unworthy of the people of God to obey a foreign power".(16) Oppression at the

(16) Gieseler- ~~Text~~ Book of Church History. p.46.

hand of foreigners inflamed a strong nationalistic feeling in Palestine. The Jews separated themselves from all that was unJewish. They had a bitter hatred against all foreign customs. The feeling grew that the time was coming when Jehovah would visit His special favor upon His chosen people by sending them a Deliverer who would free them from this foreign yoke. A Messiah was to come who would defeat all Israel's enemies and elevate the nation of the Jews to a leading place among the nations of the earth. Jerusalem was to be the capital of the world and the people of all nations would turn to this holy city for help and guidance. Often the Jews grew impatient in their expectations and incited the people to rebel against the power of Rome. Frequent rebellions took place until the general insurrection under Gesshus Florus (65A.D.) which led to the final destruction of Jerusalem (70A.D.) and the complete devastation of the whole country. This broke the Jews' resistance but it did not cure their disposition.

The general feeling in the heathen nations concerning the Jews was one of dislike and contempt. The Jews regarded all foreigners as unclean and inferior. It is only natural, therefore, that Jews came to be despised by the non-Jew. Their religion was viewed with tolerance, however. As was the custom in the Roman Empire, the religions of foreign lands were respected and honored. Gieseler, in a foot

note, points out that Alexander is said to have offered a sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem according to the direction of the high priest. (17)

Jews were scattered throughout the whole Empire. When Cyrus issued an edict permitting the exiled Jews to return to their native land only a few of them took advantage of the opportunity. So there were a number of Jews in the East. But they were in other parts of the Empire as well. When Alexander the Great founded Alexandria he planted a colony of Jews there. Many Jews had been carried into Syria by the Syrian conquerors. Antiochus the Great planted a Jewish colony in Asia Minor. From here they moved on to Greece Pompey brought Jews to Rome as prisoners of war. Later they received their freedom and were allowed to erect synagogues in which to worship their God. Judging from the statements of early writers, Tacitus, Josephus, Suetonius, etc., Harnack estimated that the number of Jews in the Empire at the time of Augustus must be reckoned at not less than four or four and a half millions. If the population of the whole Empire was almost fifty-four millions at this time (according to Beloch), then over seven per cent. of the total population were Jews. Harnack thinks that the only way to explain this large number of Jews in the Diaspora is on the basis of the successful propaganda of

(17) ~~Gieseler~~ Text-Book of Church History. p.47.

Judaism. "We must assume", he writes, "that a very large number of pagans, and in particular of kindred Semites of the lower class, trooped over to the religion of Yahweh"(18) Thus, at the time of Christ, it was not easy to find a country in the whole Roman Empire in which the Jews did not dwell.

But, however far the Jew drifted from his native land, he never forgot his God and his nationalistic hopes. His eyes were still turned toward Jerusalem as the golden city. Each year the Jews of the Diaspora sent money and offerings to the temple. As often as possible they went to Jerusalem to participate in the great festivals.

The Jews of the Diaspora, however, could not wholly escape the influence of their heathen environment. It is impossible to maintain the national individuality of a people who, for a period of many generations, have been removed from their native soil. One of the most serious results growing out of their intercourse with the heathen world was the philosophic tinge which Greek philosophy gave to Judaism. The effect of this was most noticeable at Alexandria where Grecian thought exerted a strong influence.

The Jewish Diaspora was a very significant factor in the spread of Christianity. A development of this phase of the subject belongs to a later chapter. Suffice it to say
(18) Harnack.- Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries. p.8



here that Christianity moved under the "shadow" of Judaism
and this "shadow" extended to the limits of the Empire.

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1. The first part of the report is devoted to a general survey of the situation in the country.

2. The second part of the report is devoted to a detailed analysis of the economic situation.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW FAITH.

1. Short Sketch of Jesus' Life.

"Christianity arose because a layman, Jesus of Nazareth, endowed with a self consciousness more than prophetic, came forward and attracted men so firmly to His person that, in spite of His shameful death, they were ready both to live for Him and to die for Him." (1) Christianity, like other great religions, had its beginning in the work of a personal founder. According to our Biblical accounts Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea but His home was in Nazareth in Galilee, a province in the northern part of Palestine. His father was a carpenter and therefore a man of just ordinary means. Very little is known about the early life of Jesus. Luke tells us that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him". (2) We may assume that Jesus had a normal homelife comparable to the life of any other Jewish boy raised in the religious atmosphere of conservative Judaism. He worshiped in the synagogue each Sabbath. He probably attended the synagogue school. During His spare moments He helped His father in the carpenter shop. All the while, He was growing physically, mentally, and spiritually. He was preparing Himself for some giant hour when God would need

(1) Wernle- Beginnings of Christianity. Vol. I. p. 37

(2) Luke 2:40.

a man to save the day. During the eighteen so-called "silent years" of His life, from the experience in the Temple to the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus must have thought a great deal about the needs of His people and God's will for them. At least, He "spoke with authority" when He began preaching to His fellow countrymen.

Jesus began His public ministry with an emphasis upon the main themes of the preaching of His predecessor, John the Herald. "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand". Prepare yourselves for the great transformation which is to rid the world of all evil and injustice. Along with His preaching, Jesus did much healing. To help Him carry on His work, He gathered to His side twelve men to whom He taught His message and methods. They were common folk-fishermen, tax gatherers, and farmers; but the very moment they entered upon that great adventure with Jesus, their names were destined to become immortal. With these twelve men Jesus journeyed through the hills and valleys of Palestine healing many and preaching to those who would listen to Him, whether in small or large numbers.

But, not everybody agreed with the things He taught. The Scribes and Pharisees were especially disturbed by the things He said. Gradually they grouped themselves together with the express purpose of counteracting the work of Jesus. They decided to stop this young heretic who had set out to

destroy their religion. But He seemed absolutely fearless. He would not compromise on any point. So the bitterness and opposition grew. The Scribes and the Pharisees tried to arouse the people against Him. When this would not avail they began accusing Him before the Roman officials. They charged that He was a rebel and a revolutionary. He is a mover of sedition.

With such false charges the Jews finally succeeded in getting rid of Jesus by nailing Him to a cross. He was not the kind of a Messiah they had hoped for. More than that, He was not even a good Jew. He broke their traditional laws. He was as a thorn in the flesh to the pious leaders of a religion which had ceased to be vital. What peace must have moved through their troubled hearts when this Jesus breathed His last breath!

But the Cross was not the end of Jesus. He reappeared again to the disciples. The surviving traditions about the appearances of Jesus after His crucifixion are confused and contradictory. There can be no doubt that there is an element of unhistorical legend and fancy in some of the tales. But back of these stories must be an historical core of truth. In no other way can we explain the impression made upon Peter and those who shared Peter's experience that Jesus was alive again, that they had seen Him alive and nothing could make them doubt it.

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An attempt to give a metaphysical explanation of the resurrection of our Lord would not be pertinent to our problem. The important thing for our consideration is not the how of the resurrection, but the fact of the resurrection. The disciples became persuaded that their Leader was no longer dead. He was alive again. This conviction is what transformed the disciples from the discouragement and disappointment which followed the crucifixion to the joyous enthusiasm and courage which once more stirred them to action. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." (3) "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified". (4) It is this conviction which is at the basis of the Christian faith movement. "If this faith of the Apostles in their Master's restoration to life had not been published abroad, there would have been no Christianity," writes Guignebert. (5) The resurrection of Jesus is just that essential to the beginning of the Christian faith. St. Paul wrote later to the Corinthians, "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is in vain". (6) The truth is that there never would have been any faith to be proved vain if Jesus had not risen from the dead.

(3) Acts 2:32.

(4) Acts 2:36.

(5) I Corinthians 15:17.

(6) Guignebert - Christianity. p.47.

2. The Self-Consciousness of Jesus.

The self-consciousness of Jesus can be expressed in two words, Sonship and Messiahship. However we may interpret the idea of Sonship we cannot do less than to affirm that Jesus was intensely conscious of a unique relationship with God. This relationship was not mechanical. It was a vital, personal, and ethical relationship. It was a living thing. The old Jewish Rabbis had thought of God as Father at times. But Jesus put a new meaning into the word when He said, "My Father". It was a unity of spirit. "I and the Father are one".

Perhaps the first time Jesus became conscious of this unique relationship with God was at His baptism. He must have had a deep inner experience at that time. He heard a voice saying, "Thou art my beloved Son". This consciousness was a source of great joy and strength during His ministry. When He faced the great crisis in Gethsemane He began His prayer with the words, "Abba, Father". The highest expression of His unique relationship with God is to be found in these words: "No man knoweth the Father save the Son and no man knoweth the Son save the Father". (7)

With this idea of Sonship goes also a consciousness of His Messiahship.

So soon as a man believes in a good God and sees the evil in the world

(7) Matthew 11:27.

he will either lose his faith or gain a great hope. The Jews had that hope, the hope of deliverance from evil, of the coming of a new age. That hope Jesus shared and called it the kingdom of God. He saw the meaning of His life in the light of that hope: the new age was at hand and God had chosen Him to bring it in. That meant that He was the Messiah".(8)

He was to be God's special agent in building the Kingdom.

In his book entitled, "Christianity", Guignebert speculates concerning Jesus' conception of the Kingdom and His relation to it. "He doubtless imagined it", writes this author, "in conformity with what was said about it around Himself as the advent of materialized joy for Israel and a dazzling manifestation of the benediction of Yahweh, the form of which popular imagination had never really determined exactly and which He Himself, possibly, did not strictly define". (9) It does not seem to me that Jesus did think of the Kingdom "in conformity with what was said about it around Himself". Rather the opposite is true. He was a non-conformist in this respect. His idea of the Kingdom was the cause of great disappointment among the Jews, and even to the disciples. The very fact that He was not the kind of a Messiah the Jews had expected was the chief reason for their rejecting Him. He came to build, not a temporal king-

(8) Abingdon Bible Commentary. Article on the "Teaching of Jesus" by H.F.Rall. p.906.

(9) Guignebert - Christianity. p.34.

dom, but a spiritual Kingdom. His method was not that of a conquering ruler, but of a suffering servant who would quietly plant the seeds of God's will in the hearts of individuals. It was leadership in such a Kingdom that weighed heavily upon His mind.

Jesus first became conscious of this mission at the time when John was preaching the immanence of the Kingdom. During the temptation experience He worked out the main principles by which He would carry on His work. He studied, prayed, and meditated until He felt Himself in perfect harmony with the will of God. Then He set to work. He preached repentance and called men to a new life in the Kingdom. But some refused. They rejected both Jesus and His message. It was then that Jesus pronounced His woes upon such cities as Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. (10) Christ's words in this instance show that He identified His work with God's will for the Kingdom.

At another place Jesus said, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men him will I confess before My Father who is in heaven, but whosoever shall deny Me before men him will I deny before My Father who is in heaven". (11) In other words, Jesus said that whoever would stand for the things which He stood for, adopt the same motives, purposes, and principles, would stand justified before God. This is a

(10) Matthew 11:21-24.

(11) Matthew 10:32.

striking expression of His Kingdom - consciousness.

Gradually, the thought dawned upon Him that He might have to be a suffering Messiah. Guignebert is of the opinion that Jesus did not foresee what was going to happen to Him. The action of the authorities and the decision of Pilate caught Him by surprise. He thinks that the flight of the disciples is evidence that Jesus did not expect such an outcome. (12) It is only reasonable to suppose, however, that Jesus saw the probable outline of events for the future when He faced Jerusalem on that final journey. He knew how much the Jewish authorities hated Him in Jerusalem. He knew to what extremes they would go in order to protect themselves and the religion for which they stood. He also knew that He could not compromise. One would be surprised if Jesus did not have some intimation as to what awaited Him at Jerusalem.

In all probability Jesus saw that He would have to be a suffering Messiah. This is the idea underlying the Transfiguration experience. The confession at Caesarea Philippi is evidence that Jesus thought Himself to be the Messiah. But the central point here is not the fact of Messiahship but the kind of a Messiah He was to be. Jesus introduced the question to the disciples in order to show them that He must suffer many things in the near future in Jerusalem at the

(12) Guignebert - Christianity. Op. Cit. p.43.

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hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes". (13)

3. Jesus and Judaism. Distinctive Elements in Jesus' Teaching - Ways in Which He Transcended Judaism.

There were several important parties in Judaism. One of these parties was Pharisaism. This particular sect came into prominence toward the end of the second century. B.C. It began as a lay movement and remained chiefly a lay movement throughout its history. Originally, the Pharisees were a body of pious laymen who carried on the work of teaching the Scriptures to the people. This number was comparatively small, about six thousand in all. They were the religious Puritans of their day. Edersheim points out that their object was twofold: "to observe in the strictest manner, and according to traditional law, all the ordinances concerning Levitical purity, and to be extremely punctilious in all things connected with religious dues". (14) Jesus referred to these two obligations of the Pharisees, and in both instances He pointed out a lack of inward purity which should have taken precedence over their ceremonial obligations. There is a withering denunciation of the Pharisees in Chapter twenty-three of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus accuses them of the sin of hypocrisy. They are likened to whited sepulchres filled with dead men's bones. They wash the

(13) Matthew 16:21.

(14) Edersheim - The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah. p. Vol. I. 311.

outside of the cup but forget to touch the inside. Even more severe than these passages in the New Testament are some of the sayings of the Rabbis who speak of the "plague of Pharisaism".

Kirsopp Lake does well to remind us that it is hard for us to be fair with the Pharisees since we see "through glasses coloured by early controversy". The Pharisees were not as bad as we are inclined to think sometimes. They believed that the law of Moses and the tradition of the elders had a divine sanction. To live in accordance with these was the way of Life. "Taken at their best they probably represent the highest form of a religion based on codified ethics which the world has ever seen". (15) It was this party which saved the Jewish Church from extinction when the nation was destroyed.

Another party in Judaism was that represented by the Sadducees. They represent a general reaction against the extremes of Pharisaism. The conflict between these two parties constitute the most important factor in the development of Judaism. The Sadducees represented the old conservative positions of the priesthood and inherited the tradition of the older scribism. They stood for a strict literalism of interpretation and application of the principles of Judaism. As opposed to this rigid conservatism the Phari-

(15) Lake - Landmarks of Early Christianity. Op.12.

sees championed popular religious customs. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead. Josephus states that they denied the idea of reward and punishment after death and even held to the doctrine that the soul perishes with the body. (16)

The Essenes are not referred to in the Bible. Our information about this group comes from Josephus and Philo. There were approximately four thousand of them. They grouped themselves together in small communities leading a religious and communistic life. They were located chiefly on the shores of the Dead Sea. Purity of life was one of their cardinal principles and they rejected animal sacrifices. The Essenes, though Jews, were separatists, existing outside ecclesiastical Judaism. Moffatt gives this description of them.

They were "a league of virtue, with their agricultural settlements, their quaint semi-ascetic practices, their strict novitiates, their silent meals, their white robes, their baths, their prayers, their simple but stringent socialism, their sacerdotal puritanism, their sooth-saying, their passion for the mystical world of angels, their indifference to Messianic and nationalistic hopes, their esoteric beliefs, and their approximation to sacramental religion". (17)

The general religious condition of the Jews at the birth
(16) Josephus-Antiquities XVIII. 1.4.

(17) Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Vol V.
p.400. Article on "Essenes".

of Christ does not call fourth our commendation. There was a sad bondage to the letter of the law, while the spirit which had formerly permeated their religion was smothered out by a morbid attachment to forms and traditions. Their expectation of the coming Messiah was still vivid in their minds but they had accomodated this hope to the baser passions of their nature. The Messiah was to be a conquering hero who would free Israel from her enemies with a rod of iron and establish an outward, universal theocracy.

Now Jesus was a man of His own day. It is absurd to attempt to separate Him from His own times and say that He rose above the influences of His environment. In fact, the only way to make a fair estimate of Jesus is to consider Him as a product of His age. He lived largely in accordance with the accepted customs and beliefs of His day. He attended the synagogue like any other devout Jew. He went up to Jerusalem to observe the special feast days. He believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, obeyed the Law of Moses, and looked into the future to the coming of a Golden Age. Jesus was, indeed, a son of Judaism.

He knew well the sacred writings of His people and found much help and inspiration in them. When He was in the wilderness He turned to Deuteronomy to find answers to the suggestion of the Evil One. During the years preceding His public ministry He must have studied the books of the

prophets with enthusiasm. At least, He stands in line with them. A close reading of the Gospels will reveal with what clear insight Jesus picked out passages in the Old Testament to apply to conditions in His own day. He must have been well acquainted with the great men of God in the Old Testament. The thought of what Moses and Elijah were forced to endure helped Him to settle His own problem of suffering.

Jesus built upon Judaism but He also transcended Judaism. He was a man of His own age but He is also the man of the ages. Much of what Jesus taught grew out of the Old Testament but there were also some distinctive elements in His teaching. There is something about Jesus and His message which is timeless and universal, a spirit which the formalism and legalism of Judaism could not contain.

Jesus believed in the Fatherhood of God. This conception colored all His acts and teaching. Parent's love their children but God's love is still greater. He loves like the good shepherd who is not content with ninety-nine sheep when one is lost in the cold and the darkness. It was this belief which helped Him to feel a sense of God's nearness and strength in hours of crisis, and danger. He taught that God is personal and that we may have fellowship with Him.

But God's love and mercy do not destroy His ethical

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character. God demands justice and righteousness. This belief helped Jesus to steady Himself in those moments when He might have expected God's love to deliver Him from a trying situation. He taught that we shall receive an abundance of God's love only as we ourselves learn to love our fellowmen. We shall receive forgiveness only in the measure that we ourselves forgive.

Jesus made a radical departure from the Judaism of His day in His conception of the nature of religion. He believed religion to be ethical and spiritual rather than formal and ceremonial. For this reason He did not hesitate to break traditional rules when they stood in the way of helping to bring abundant life to people. Washing hands would avail little if people were unclean on the inside. Fasting was of little value unless it brought one nearer to God and to the needs of His fellowmen. He showed how religion breaks hard-and-fast rules, and how it lives and grows in the free air of great ethical principles and lofty ideals.

Jesus transcended Judaism in the high regard which He held for the worth of human personality. He taught that individuals were more important than institutions and that the latter existed for the benefit of the former. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. (18) He

said that

(18) Mark 2:27.

said that a man was of more value than a sheep. There is no material thing, be it the whole world, which is worth half of what a man's soul is worth. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" (19)

But still the question remains: Wherein lies the real significance of Jesus? Certainly not in the fact that He was a great teacher or a dynamic prophet. The world has had many of these. Nor is it found in the teachings of Jesus. Most of what He taught can be found in Judaism at its best, as the Jewish leaders of our day are quick to point out. Jesus was deeply indebted to the old Hebrew prophets. What He really did was to shift the emphasis and give His people a better perspective. And this alone cannot account for the historical significance of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul put his finger on the real significance of Jesus when he said: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself". (20) Jesus revealed God to humanity. "In His personality", writes Dr. Cadman, "Jesus offers us the manifestation of God, not by a series of impressive truths about Deity, but by the far more compelling instrumentality of His own actual being and character, which originated in His total consciousness of oneness with the Father", (21) In Him is the fulfillment of the twofold quest

(19) Matthew 16:26.

(21) Cadman - The Christ of God. p.18

(20) II Corinthians 5:19

will find a man who of more value than a stone. There is no
intrinsic value, so it is the value which is worth
of what a man's soul is worth. What else is worth a man
if he gains the world and loses his soul? (19)

But still the question remains: Where is the real
significance of Jesus? Certainly not in the fact that he
was a great teacher or a dynamic speaker. The world has had
many of these. Nor is it found in the language of Jesus.
None of them so beautiful and so true in Jesus as his words,
or the living beauty of his life and death in Jesus.
There are many things in the old New Testament. What
he taught his was to write the Gospels and give his people
a better knowledge. And this alone cannot answer for
the spiritual significance of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul put his finger on the real significance
of Jesus when he said: "God was in Christ reconciling the
world unto himself." (20) Jesus' teaching was to himself
"the reconciliation of the world." Jesus' life was
the manifestation of God, and by a series of revelations
Jesus showed God, not by the law, but by the love which
emanated from his own soul. Jesus was the revelation of God
in the total universe, a revelation which the
world has. In this is the fulfillment of the world's quest.

of God after man and of man after God. The idea is expressed beautifully in a little quatrain by Edwin Markham:

Here is the truth in a little creed,
Enough for all the ways we go:
In Love is all the Law we need;
In Christ is all the God we know.

"In Christ is all the God we know". This is the moral and spiritual significance of Jesus. This is the great discovery which is fundamental to the historical individuality of the Christian faith movement - the discovery that God was in Christ. It was so precious to the early Christians that they could not refrain from sharing it with others. It was information, good news, a discovery which everybody should know about. The knowledge of a Christlike God furnished the missionary zeal of the early Christians and constituted the individuality of the faith they represented.

Antecedent to this discovery, however, was the experience through which it was mediated. Before people could be convinced that God was in Christ they had to experience the value of God through Christ. The early Christians had that experience. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature", wrote St. Paul. "The old things are passed away; behold, they are become new". (22) This has been the experience of Christians through the ages. We have come to realize that "the discord of man's making between God and man has been removed by God's overtures in Christ; that the obstacles (22) II Corinthians 5:17.

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which man has felt to his approach to God-in the unclean hands and the unclean lips-have been taken away; and that with a heart, such as the human heart is, a man may yet come to God in Jesus, because of Jesus, through Jesus". (23)

4. The Rise of the Christian Consciousness.

Christianity had its origin in Judaism. Its founder was a Jew. In His teaching He accepted the prophets of the Old Testament and said that He came not to overthrow the law but to fulfill it. The first leaders and missionaries of the new sect were Jews. The man who did more than any other to spread the message of Jesus over the Roman empire was a Jew and belonged to one of the strictest sects in Judaism. Paul was a Pharisee. The place used by the missionaries to deliver their message to those who had never heard of Jesus was the Jewish synagogue which had gone to the limits of the Empire. So we see that Christianity had its birth in Judaism in a very vital sense.

But Christianity became separated from Judaism. The followers of Jesus came to realize that they had something which could not be found in the religion of the Jews. There was an individuality about Jesus and His message which made its separation from Judaism inevitable. The stages by which the early followers of Jesus came to realize the distinctiveness or individuality of their faith were gradual.

(23) Glover - The Jesus of History. p.221.

We cannot expect that Christianity could have severed its relations with Judaism by a mere dictum of its Founder. History proves that new religions do not begin that way. The seeds planted by Jesus needed time to grow, sunshine from heaven, and workers to cultivate the soil in which they were planted.

Even the first followers of Christ did not believe that they were starting anything new. "We are the true Israel", they asserted. They reasoned "out of the Scriptures" that Jesus was the Christ. Their method was conservative. It always has been so. Religion must conserve the spiritual values of the past. Recall that Luther and Wesley did not want to break with the church in which they had been nurtured and refused to believe that they were starting new movements the effects of which were to be world-wide.

There are four essentials elements in the dawn of the Christian consciousness. The most important of these is the teaching of Jesus which reflected a spiritual power not to be found in Judaism or any other religion in the empire. Jesus introduced two new principles the implications of which can never be exhausted. They have to do with man's relation to God and man's relation to man. God is an Heavenly Father and we may have fellowship with Him and secondly, personality is the highest value in life and our relation to each other must be that of brotherly kindness.

To the Jew, God was a righteous autocrat who required that men live up to a lot of rules and regulations. God was a punctilious book-keeper who made a little check mark every time an individual broke one of these many rules. Such an external, legalistic system was far removed from the conception of our being "sons" of God. Furthermore, the Jew had said, "Love your friends and hate your enemies". Jesus said, "Love your enemies". The Law said, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". Jesus said, "If a man smite thee on one cheek turn the other also, if any man demand thy coat give him thy cloak also and whosoever shall compel thee to go with him one mile go with him twain". (24) The concepts of Jesus reinforced by His unique relationship to God, constituted a spiritual power which was destined to break the encircling bonds of Jewish legalism. Inherently, then, those who followed Jesus had something new and different.

The second element to be found among the causes giving rise to the Christian consciousness is the proximity of time relation and physical contact which the Apostles had with Jesus. The thing that indelibly stamped the teaching and spirit of Jesus upon these men was their experiences in connection with the high points of His life, His crucifixion and resurrection. These things made Jesus unforgettable and prepared the way for the coming of the spiritual power which (24) Matthew 5:39-41.

he had promised, the Holy Spirit. We could not understand Pentecost apart from the disciples' vivid memories of their physical contact with Jesus.

Another factor which was influential in the rise of the Christian consciousness is the persecution to which the followers of Jesus were subjected. The first martyr in the new faith was Stephen.(25) Stephen had denounced the Jewish blindness, which of old had persecuted the prophets and now at length had slain the Messiah. He had preached that the Almighty dwells not in temples made with hands. This was too much for those Jews who had no good for Jesus of Nazareth. So they stoned him to death. But the courage with which he faced his killers and his spirit of forgiveness was contagious. It communicated itself to others.

Stephen's death was just the beginning of a general persecution inflicted upon the followers of "the way" by the non-Christian Jews. We know how Paul carried his persecutions "to foreign cities".

The principal causes of Jewish persecution are not hard to detect. Judaism had gone to seed in Pharisaism. Pharisaism was a service of formal and legal righteousness, from which the spirit had long since taken its flight. Its already complicated observance had become unbearable. Christianity meant the fulfillment of the law and, therefore, freedom from the law.

(25) Acts 7.

Again, Pharisaism was looking for a temporal kingdom of Judah which should expel the hated Roman and rule the world. Jesus, as the Messiah, certainly did not fulfill this expectation and, therefore, to Pharisaism, He was a false Messiah and His followers had to be wiped out before they had time to influence others to a belief in Him.

Pharisaism was extremely hostile to heathenism. It was exclusive. It would keep itself free from all contamination by the outside world. But Jesus came with a spiritual kingdom which was to be universal, for all men. Jews and Gentiles both were to be citizens in this new Kingdom.

The intense antagonism between these two points of view is obvious. The result was the persecution of the weaker side.

Finally, the conversion of Gentiles was a factor making for the awakening of the Christian consciousness. The question arose as to what should be required of heathen converts. We know the story of Peter's vision and his intercourse with the Roman centurion, Cornelius. (26) As a result of this incident Peter is convinced both of the lawfulness of eating with a Gentile and of the fact that the heathen may be admitted directly to share in the heavenly good offered in the Gospel. The brethren at Jerusalem, however, were not prepared for this catholic proceeding of Peter and this new in- (26) Acts 10.

terpretation of the Gospel. They "contended against him". They demanded an explanation.

But the man who was most influential in bringing Gentiles into the fold and thereby helping to free Christianity from the bonds of Judaism was Paul. The occasion of the Apostolic Conference, mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, serves as a fine example of Paul's work in this respect.

Upon Paul's return from his first missionary campaign he was met at Antioch with the question of circumcision. Is circumcision necessary to salvation? It was decided to take the question to Jerusalem. Paul was wise in taking Titus a Gentile convert, with him. The Judaizers at Jerusalem demanded that Paul circumcise Titus, but he refused to do so. With Barnabas he recounted the work of God among Gentiles, how the Holy Spirit had been given to them without their conformity to the Jewish rites. After much discussion the question was decided. Paul won. Circumcision was not necessary to admission into the new faith. This decision was the final and decisive step which proved to the world that Christianity was something not to be contained within Judaism, but something bigger than Judaism, and different from Judaism.

Certain practices of the followers of Jesus made for a feeling of separation. The first disciples were baptized in the name of Christ. They made public confession of His Messiahship. They said that the crucifiers of Christ were

wrong and Jesus was right. Then, too, they participated in a common meal ending in a remembrance of Christ though the Lord's Supper. They had, also, a community of goods which was partly a result of their expectation of a second appearance of Jesus to take place in the near future.

For a long time the Romans had great difficulty in distinguishing Christians from Jews. They could not understand why the Christians were so unpopular with the Jews. Pilate, Gallio, Felix and Festus were all perplexed in regards to differences arising between these two groups. Even the authorities at Rome were troubled over their squabbles, and finally expelled both parties because they "were perpetually quarreling over a certain Chrestus". From 81-96 under Domitian, Christians were severely persecuted. This seems to indicate that Christians were distinct from Judaism at this time and were "persecuted for the name".

CHAPTER III.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. The First Disciples at Jerusalem.

According to the Gospels and the tradition of the Christian Church, Jesus chose twelve men to help Him in His work and instructed them to preach the Gospel throughout the world. After the departure of their Leader these men continued their work and became the rulers of the infant community of believers at Jerusalem. The death of Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, reduced the number to eleven. This vacancy was later filled by a certain Matthias. (1) By virtue of their appointment by Jesus Himself, these men assumed leadership in the primitive community. In addition to the Twelve there were other workers, missionaries, and the like, who made up the larger number of Apostles. Of this group Peter appears to be the leader. His primary position was probably based upon his personal qualities which Jesus Himself had recognized. To ground this primacy upon any formal recognition by the Apostles, growing out of Matthew's report about building the Church on Peter or John's statement that the Risen Lord had entrusted the leadership of His flock to him, is not warranted by the probabilities in the case. His leadership grew out of his natural qualities for that position.

At first, the followers of Jesus differed very little

(1) Acts 1:15 f.

from their fellow countrymen. Their beliefs and practices were about the same as other Jews. They went up to the Temple to worship. They kept the Law. In only one respect did they differ from those about them. This difference is well stated by Duchesne. "One point alone distinguished them: for them the Messiah did not belong to a vague, uncertain future. They had found Him, for He had come and had revealed Himself: and they were sure of seeing Him again soon". (2) They knew the future Messiah whom they expected to behold coming in the clouds of heaven in the near future. But even this point of difference was big enough to cause trouble. The Jewish priesthood did not like the idea of exalting to the level of a glorious Messiah a man whom they had ~~been~~ executed as a dangerous character. It is not surprising, therefore, that trouble arose between the Jewish authorities and the followers of Jesus.

The organization of the primitive community of believers was very much complicated. The people lived together almost like a family. In their midst was the vivid expectation of the speedy return of the Lord. While they felt themselves bound by the authority of the Law they nevertheless recognized a higher authority, namely, the commands of Jesus and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. "We must obey God rather than men", is the way the Apostles answered the supreme trial.

(2) Duchesne- Early History of the Christian Church. p.12.

Bunal of Judaism. (3) There was also the authority of the Twelve which was final within the community of believers. The leaders of the community had the power to inflict punishment which might go as far as excommunication. The belief that their organization was the Messianic community of the latter days led to legislative enactments which were intended to keep it pure and holy. It was necessary in some instances therefore, to go as far as excommunication.

In addition, the community developed its own rules of life which controlled the individual and social life of its members. The fraternal relations which prevailed in the family were thought to be the form of life most appropriate to the Messianic period. A fine example of their communal life is in Acts. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common". (4) The whole life was reduced to a fixed order. "Probably never in the history of religion has a new society appeared with a more abundant and elaborate equipment", writes Harnack. (5)

In relation to the other communities of believers which arose throughout Palestine and neighboring lands the community at Jerusalem was central. Natural circumstances pointed to Jerusalem as the real center and starting-point of

(3) Acts 5:29.

(4) Acts 4:32.

(5) Harnack - The Constitution and Law of the church. p.20

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Christianity. The Church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to control the community of Gentile Christians at Antioch. All matters of dispute were taken to Jerusalem for final settlement. The unique position of the Jerusalem community is suggested by Paul's anxiety to receive its recognition.

According to an old tradition the Twelve Apostles remained twelve years in Jerusalem. They were then scattered by the persecution of Herod. It was in this persecution that James the son of Zebedee was killed. With the scattering of the twelve there was a total change in the organization at Jerusalem. James, the brother of Jesus, together with some presbyters took the place of the government of the Twelve. We know very little about this change which took place in the government of the early Church. Harnack comments that this change "marks the first stage in the weakening of the ideal of a Scriptural Messiahship, and can hardly have taken place without a crisis". (6)

The position of James as chief ruler above all the other presbyters is unique. There is a tradition that he was the first bishop of Jerusalem appointed by Christ Himself and the Apostles. There is little doubt that he and his successors exercised a monarchical power over the church but it is very doubtful that he bore the title of "bishop" since this title does not occur within Judaism. It is probable, how-

(6) Harnack - The Constitution and Law of the church. p.33.

ever, that the exalted position of James might have given rise to the conception of a universal episcopate.

2. Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers.

In addition to the apostles there were professional prophets and teachers in the community of believers. Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians: "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers". (7) These three offices make up the higher class of the ministry and have a certain spiritual kinship.

The function of the Twelve Apostles was regarded as distinctly spiritual. Their work was not the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. When the Hellenists and the Hebrews in the community at Jerusalem got into a dispute over the distribution of charity to the widows, the Apostles called the disciples together and said: "It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethern from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, who we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the Word". (8) This is in keeping with the words of St. Mark. "He ordained twelve that they should be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach". (9)

(7) I Corinthians 12:28.

(8) Acts 6.

(9) Mark 3:14.

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After the Apostles come the prophets. It is rather difficult to draw a clear cut distinction between the two offices. An apostle is one who is sent, a messenger who proclaims the Gospel of deliverance to those in darkness. The prophet speaks to those who have been converted by the preaching of the Apostles. The prophet was the man upon whom the Spirit descended. Like St. Paul he might not have known Christ in the flesh. Yet he knew the mind of Christ through the Spirit. The prophet had visions which he interpreted to others. While the Apostle spoke with the authority of tradition the prophet spoke with the authority of immediate inspiration. Thus prophecy stands for a new power in the church collateral with tradition.

The third group in the higher ministry of the Word are the teachers. "The mission of the teachers," writes Allen, "was to meet the awakened intellect, to explain difficulties, to solve the problems with which the reason was struggling, embarrassed by a previous training, confused by rival and conflicting systems of philosophy or religion". (10) This was a difficult task in the Roman Empire since there were so many conflicting systems of philosophy and religion.

While the functions of these three offices were distinct they might all be found in one person. Such a person was St. Paul. He had a rare combination of these gifts and this

(10) Allen - Christian Institutions. p.29.

accounts, in large measure, for his great influence and success as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

3. Presbyters, Bishops, Deacons.

With the passing of the first generation of the Apostolic age we enter the age of the elders or presbyters. The term "presbyter" is ambiguous. It may denote one of three things; the old as opposed to the young, a title of honour, or an elected and formally appointed member of a council. It appears that the presbyters were a class of men entrusted with the administration of local churches. Such an understanding of the term arises out of the references made to it by the writer of the Acts of the Apostles. He states that Barnabas and Paul ordained elders in every church. (11) In Acts the presbyters are associated with the Apostles in the government of the church in Jerusalem as if they were on the same level. They are usually linked up together. The question as to whether the Jewish ceremonial law was binding on heathen converts was taken to the "apostles and elders" in Jerusalem. As Paul and Timothy went from place to place they delivered "the decrees that were ordained by the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem". In the First Epistle of St. Peter, the Apostle exhorts the elders to feed the flock of God. The Epistle General of St. James instructs those who are sick to call for the elders of the church who

(11) Acts 14:23.

...in large numbers, for his great influence and...
...as the people in the country.
...
...the people of the first generation of the...
...the age of the people in the country. The...
...is a... It is a... It is a...
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shall pray over them. Concerning this uncertainty regarding the exact nature of the office of the presbyter Allen writes; "It may have been that their position and duties were too familiar to need definition, or that they were too indefinite for exact description". (12)

The nature of the office of the bishop is more definite. The bishop had to possess the qualifications of a pastor whose duty was to teach and rule the Church. That means that he had to be in possession of the higher Christian virtues. It was also necessary that he be in good report in the heathen world outside the church. His office called for the ability to refute those who attempted to pervert the truth of the Church. It is possible that the bishops were chosen out of the presbyterate to do the special work with which their names were connected.

The deacons were servants in the work of administration. They distributed the charity funds and served tables. Their special function was to distribute the meat of the sacrifice among the festival company at a religious feast. In this respect the deacons held an office which they have never lost. It is still a function of their office to assist the presiding officer at the Eucharist in many churches.

We may assume that the diaconate had its origin in the appointment of the seven men whose duty it was to look after

(12) Allen - Christian Institutions. p.42.

[The text in this section is extremely faint and illegible, appearing as a series of horizontal lines.]

the distribution of food and alms. The seven were chosen by popular election and afterwards ordained by the Twelve with the laying on of hands. There has been a great deal of dispute in regards to this point. Many deny that the appointment of the seven had anything to do with the office of deacon. Lightfoot holds the opposite view. In support of his position he argues that the work of the seven men corresponds to the functions of the office of deacon. The emphasis which Luke places upon the incident seems to indicate that he considered it the initiation of a new order of things in the Church. Irenaeus considered the Seven to have been deacons. Centuries later the Roman Church restricted the number of deacons to seven, showing that the main line of Christian tradition supports this view. (13)

4. The Episcopacy.

There are no signs of episcopal government in the early Church before the year 70. Within the following three decades, however, the episcopal office came into existence. The details of the circumstances, which surrounded its development are uncertain. It is possible only to point to certain situations which were conducive to the formation of the episcopacy. One of these was the fall of Jerusalem. When this took place the visible center of the Church was removed. In addition, there were dissensions between Jew and Gentile con-

(13) Lightfoot-Dissertations on the Apostolic Age. Op.Cit.p.145.

verts. Diverse elements arose in the Christian communities. Gnosticism was beginning to make inroads upon the unstable organization of the Church. All these various elements bore witness to the great need of centralization if the early Church was to be saved from utter ruin. The answer to this pressing need was the rise of the episcopacy.

I have already pointed out the pre-eminence which was assigned to James, the brother of Jesus. Upon his death, his place was taken by Symeon whom Hegesippus distinctly calls a bishop. The successor to Symeon was Justus who began his episcopate about the year 108 A.D. Eusebius gives a complete list of the successors to Symeon. (14)

5. Baptism - Sign of Entrance Into the New Fellowship.

Baptism was practiced from a very early date in the Apostolic period. There are no indications in the Gospels that Jesus Himself established the practice. In speaking of His successor John the Baptist makes it clear that Jesus would not baptize with water as he had done but with the Holy Spirit and with fire. We can understand Jesus' failure to baptize by assuming that He had no desire to found an exclusive society during His life time. But, although Jesus Himself did not baptize, He commanded His disciples to do so. (15) This command belongs to the latest portion of the Synoptic Gospels and furnishes the basis for the rite of baptism in (14) Eusebius - Ecclesiastical History. IV 5.

(15) Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16

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(14) Eusebius - Ecclesiastical History. IV. 5.

(15) Matthew 28:19. Mark 16:16.

the early Church.

Baptism denoted reception into the Church. Those who were baptized became members of the body of Christ and the brethren. The act was an outward indication that one had yielded himself to Christ. The effect of Christ's death and resurrection was thereupon extended to him. The significance of the act is revealed in a custom mentioned by Paul in First Corinthians 15:29, namely, the baptism of living members of the Church in behalf of those who had died. The substitution was possible only when the dead men had adhered to the Gospel in life. But the rite appeared necessary because only in this way could one have an interest in Christ in the resurrection.

6. The Meetings of the Congregation.

From the very earliest times the members of the Christian communities met in divine service. The primary purpose of these meetings was not to influence Deity nor to worship Deity, but to express a common faith. The object was to cherish their peculiar religious possession in the spiritual life. It was a close parallel to the practice in the synagogue where the service consisted chiefly in instruction in the Law and devotion to the sacred writings. In the Christian meetings Christ took the place of the Law in the Jewish synagogue. The people came together for the mutual expression, confirmation, and exposition of their faith in Christ. The Jewish

Christians followed the main outline of the Temple service. The Gentile Christians had no such p̄cedent to follow. In fact, they had to break away from the order of worship to which they had been accustomed since the essential feature in heathen worship was the influencing of Deity through sacrifices.

There were probably two kinds of Christian meetings. One meeting was for the preaching of the Word; the other was for the common meal. It is not likely that both of those were combined in one meeting. Paul speaks about "coming together to eat." The implication is that it was a separate meeting for that purpose alone. Such an arrangement would seem necessary. In those meetings where the Gospel was preached there was also the possibility of unbelievers being present, But these could not participate in the Lord's Supper. Only those who had been baptized could partake in this service.

The best source of our information about the early Christian meetings is Paul. (16) He had a great deal to say about the order of these meetings. He suggested that the prophets present themselves in groups of two or three. If any person had a revelation in the meeting the speaker was to stop and let him declare it. The man who spoke with tongues was to be accompanied by an interpreter. Women were not allowed to speak in the meetings. Everything was to be

(16) I Corinthians 14.

Christians followed the main outline of the Jewish service. The Gentile Christians had no such presence to follow. In fact, they had to break away from the order of service so much that they had been accustomed since the apostolic times in Jewish worship was the influence of holy things.

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The best source of our information about the early Christian meetings is Paul. (1) He had a great deal to say about the origin of these meetings. He suggested that the first Christians gathered in groups of two or three. If any person had a revelation in his meeting the speaker was to stop and let his hearers sit. The one who spoke first began and so he was regarded by an interpreter. When one was allowed to speak in the meetings. Everything was to be

done orderly and for the edification of the whole group.

The meeting for the ministry of the Word was usually opened by an invocation either by the speaker or by the group as a whole. Any one or more might pray who offered themselves. Following the prayer came the period for teaching. This embraced all forms of instructions with the single exception of prophecy. The prophets' turn came after the didactic address. When the prophet arose to speak it was assumed that he had had a revelation. The prophet did not arrive at his subject matter through his own thought or observation as the teacher might do. He had received his message through the work of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy was not the prerogative of a few selected individuals. Paul expresses the desire that all might prophesy and he calls upon everyone to strive to exercise the gift.

A thing which presented some difficulty in the meetings was the speaking with tongues. It appears from the Apostle's exhortation that this practice was a favorite one among the people and that it had become the goal of an ambitious rivalry. But what went on was altogether unintelligible to others. So, for the purpose of edification, the Apostle advised that every speaker with tongues have an interpreter to make his message intelligible to the whole group.

Very little can be said with certainty in regards to the reading of Scriptures in these meetings. It is a safe con-

jecture, however, that since the Old Testament was regarded as sacred in the Apostolic Age and since it was read regularly in the synagogue, the custom was continued in the Christian congregation.

The meeting for the Lord's Supper was based upon a command made by Jesus Himself at the close of a common meal taken on the last evening of His life. The celebration must have been observed from the beginning. This festival of the Church was especially significant since it was the great source of spiritual union between Christ and the believer. "The early Apostolic Church solemnized in this mystery the memory of its Lord, under the symbols of His living presence and his covenant - forming death". (17)

The celebration of the Lord's Supper by the early Church bears some similarity to the sacrificial feasts of the heathen. But there was a difference. The participant did not come with the feeling that he had offered his sacrifice. He had none to offer. He did come with the conviction that He had taken part in the sacrifice which had been offered for him, the supreme moral sacrifice. The experience was one of deep spiritual fellowship with God which led to a higher and better life. It was this distinctive element in the Christian festival of the Lord's Supper which differentiated it from the sacrificial feasts in heathenism.

(17) Weizsacker- The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church.
P. 233.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE FACE OF POLYTHEISM AND IDOLATRY.

1. The Necessity of Expansion.

By the year 100 Christianity had spread throughout Asia Minor, Syria, Macédonia, Greece and was firmly planted in Rome. Of the various lands into which Christianity had gone Asia Minor was the most extensively Christianized. About the year 112 Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, reported to Trajan that this new religion had greatly affected the older temple worship. He expressed hope in the fact that many of them had denied their faith by praying to the gods and burning incense before a statue of the Emperor. "It is certain enough that the temples, deserted until quite recently, begin to be frequented, that the ceremonies of religion, long disused, are restored, and that fodder for the victims comes to market, whereas buyers of it were until now very few".(1) From this it is easy to see how wide spread and effective the Christians were. If many of them recanted under the governorship of Pliny we can only say that they did not continue to do so, nor was it characteristic of Christians in general.. The Christian faith movement continued to spread in a world already full of religions. It persisted in the face of the established State religion. It thrived in spite

(1)Ayer - Source Book for Ancient Church History. pp.21,22.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

1. The Problem of the Future of the Church

By the year 1900 Christianity had become the dominant religion of the world. It had spread to every corner of the globe, and its influence was felt in every sphere of human activity. The Church, as the visible expression of Christianity, had grown to a vast and powerful organization, with a hierarchy of bishops, priests, and monks, and a complex system of laws and regulations. It had been the center of civilization for centuries, and its teachings had shaped the minds and hearts of men. But now, in the early years of the twentieth century, the Church found itself facing a new and formidable challenge. The scientific revolution, with its emphasis on reason and empirical evidence, had begun to shake the foundations of the religious faith. The discovery of the laws of nature, the development of the theory of evolution, and the progress of modern medicine and technology had all contributed to a growing skepticism about the supernatural claims of the Church. The young generation, in particular, was turning away from the traditional teachings of the Church and seeking new sources of inspiration and meaning. The Church, in response, had tried to adapt itself to the new conditions, but its efforts had been largely unsuccessful. It had been unable to provide a convincing answer to the questions that were being asked, and it had lost touch with the needs and aspirations of the people. The future of the Church, therefore, was a matter of great concern to all who were interested in the progress of civilization. It was a problem that had to be solved if the Church was to remain a vital and effective force in the world.

of the severest persecution. It successfully withstood the attacks of all its foes. How is this remarkable fact to be explained?

Gibbon states five causes for the rapid progress of Christianity in the Roman Empire.(2) They are the zeal of the early Christians which he represents as derived from the Jews but purged of Jewish narrowness; the doctrine of a future life of rewards and punishments the power of working miracles; the high morals of the Christians; and the union and discipline of the Christian community. Undoubtedly these were important factors in the spread of Christianity. But they do not represent the central point. The secret of its power, and therefore the very life and soul of the Christian religion, is Christ Himself. The zeal of the early Christians was a zeal for a Person and a cause identified with Him. Their belief in a future life had its basis in their faith in a risen Lord who had ascended into heaven. Whatever miraculous power was connected with their work had its source in the Founder of the faith. Their high grade of morals and fraternal unity grew out of their deep loyalty to Jesus and His ideals. The victory of Christianity in the Roman world was the victory of Jesus.

This new religion made a powerful appeal to the poor and oppressed and to all the multitudes of people for whom the

(2) Gibbon- Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Chapter XV,

of the earliest period. It is generally admitted that
the state of affairs at all times. And in this connection it is to be
explained.

Others have been known for the past history of the
state in the Roman Empire. (2) They are the result of the
early Christian era which is represented as having been the last
and greatest of Jewish history; the doctrine of a future
life of reward and punishment the point of working out
the high moral of the Christian era and the union and alliance
of the Christian community. Undoubtedly there were in
constant contact in the sphere of Christianity. But they do
not represent the central point. The center of the world
and therefore the very life and soul of the Christian religion
and, in Christ himself. The soul of the early Christian
was a soul for a person and a sacred identity with him.
That point is a future life and the basis in which is
a clear light and a spiritual life. The latter almost
less known was connected with their work and the union in
the foundation of the faith. Their high state of belief and
spiritual unity grew out of their own loyalty to Jesus and
his teachings. The victory of Christianity in the Roman world
was the victory of Jesus.

This was followed by a powerful appeal to the poor and
oppressed and to all the outcasts of society for whom the
(2) Christianity and the Fall of the Roman Empire. (3) Christianity

world had little to offer in the way of hope and joy. It was to these very people that Jesus came to minister.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings
To the poor:
He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the
captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord". (2)

The expansion of Christianity in the Roman Empire was inevitable because it offered what people had been searching for — a religion which offered an actual experience of God. Through faith in Christ individuals came into a living and entirely personal relation to God Himself. This was possible for all classes of men. Even slaves came into a living experience of God. To be a disciple of Christ meant to be a child of God filled with His Spirit. The Acts of the Apostles is very clear on this point. To be a true disciple was to be filled with God's Spirit. The exponents of this new religion promised that it had power to bring every man into an immediate and living connection with God. This is the most important feature in the distinctive character of the Christian faith movement.

The Synoptic Gospels do not have much to say about the universal mission of the Christian faith. According to Matthew, the mission of Jesus was to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel". "Go not on the road of the Gentiles, and (3)Luke 4:18,19.

and his little to offer to the way of hope and joy.

was to make very sure that Jesus came to minister.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me."

Because he wanted to be one of your friends.

In the hour.

He came to be your friend to the

end.

And remembering to show to the world.

To put us finally free from sin.

To provide the necessary path to the Lord.

The mission of Christianity in the world today

is to be a religion which offers to all men and

women a path to God through Christ Jesus.

It is a religion which offers to all men and

women a path to God through Christ Jesus.

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enter no city of the Samaritans; rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". (4) The story of the Syro-Phoenician woman is outside this boundary. But, in the mind of the evangelist, there was no doubt that this incident represented an exceptional case for Jesus. The command of the risen Lord to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit", is given by Matthew. (5) Harnack and many others are of the opinion that Jesus never uttered these words at all. The command reflects the historical developments of a later age when the Gospels were written.

Mark, although omitting the limitation of the Mission to Palestine and the Jewish people, does not venture to assign the mission any universal scope. Luke records the command of the risen Jesus to preach the gospel to all nations. In the main, however, he follows Mark. While he does not expressly confine the activity of Jesus to the Jewish nation, he gives no word or incident which describes that activity as universal.

The Fourth Gospel differs from the Synoptics since it was written at a later time. Two generations of Christians had passed by the time John's Gospel was written. At that time the Gentile mission was well established and was very fruitful. The author looks upon the Jews as a reprobate people.

(4) Matthew 10:5,6.

(5) Matthew 28:19f.

ple. Jesus is not the Saviour of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel", but of the whole world. God so loved the world that He gave His Son. Most significant of all is the incident where the Greeks ask for Jesus. The whole Gospel is permeated with a universalism not to be found in the Synoptic accounts.

Even if Jesus never gave an express command to preach the Gospel to all nations, there is nevertheless an implicit universalism in Jesus and His principles. His followers soon came to realize that fact. Christianity was bound to spread because its very genius was a great discovery to be shared by all people. It began with an announcement of this discovery. "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand", said Jesus. It is an accomplished fact. All His hearers had to do was to accept it. The Gospel really was "good news" because it was a glorious discovery. It was not speculation but information. When Paul went to Athen, the great intellectual center of the Mediterranean world and home of philosophy, he had a discovery to announce to the Athenians. "I found an altar", he said, "with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you". (6) This is the historical individuality of the Christian faith movement and the secret of its rapid expansion. "Where no other religion could sow and reap, (6) Acts 17:23.

this religion was enabled to scatter its seed and to secure a harvest." (7) The reason for this was its unique character. To show how Christianity preserved its individuality in the face of heathen opposition and in the midst of heretical sects is the problem we face in the remaining chapters.

2. Conditions Conducive to Its Expansion.

The expansion of Christianity in the first century was due to a very large extent to the Diaspora. The Jewish synagogues throughout the Empire furnished centers for the development of Christian communities. The extent to which the Jews had permeated the Empire has already been indicated. If Judaism was actually so extensive throughout the Empire as to embrace seven per cent of the total population under Augustus one begins to realize what possibilities it contained for the spread of Christianity.

The Hellenizing process which was begun by Alexander the Great tended to produce a unity of language and ideas. The political unity of the Roman Empire made for peace and was a fitting antecedent to the conception of a heavenly monarchy and the rise of a universal church. The facilities for international travel was a help to the Christian missionary. The religious policy of Rome was one of toleration, at least as long as the existence of the State-religion was not threatened by a serious rival. Christianity was thus

(7) Harnack -Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries. p. 55.

saved from extinction in its infancy. The existence of various associations together with municipal and provincial organizations suggested the most important forms of organization for the church. All of these were external conditions which were of tremendous value to the expansion of the Christian religion.

Another condition favorable to its expansion, which we may term internal, was the religious situation in the imperial age. Christianity faced a world of polytheism. Monotheism versus polytheism -- the two stood firmly opposed to each other. But polytheism had an inherent weakness and this weakness added to the strength of monotheistic Christianity. Polytheism was weakening because it was opposed by the forces of general knowledge, philosophy, and ethics. Many of the intellectuals had long been skeptical about the value of these polytheistic systems. But when this skepticism came into the minds of the common people the old religions were doomed. It sounded like a convincing argument when Christians exposed the vice of the Roman deities and the various forms of idolatry and pictured by the side of this a God who was ethically pure and One with whom the individual may have immediate, spiritual communion. "Religion faced religion", writes Harnack; "but whilst the one was new and living, the other was old, nor could anyone tell exactly what had become of it". (8) Harnack- The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries. p.28.

But even more important than this was the process of religious syncretism which was going on throughout the Empire. There was a blending of religions. To explain the origin of the world and the soul a system of aeons, intermediate beings, semi-gods, and deliverers grew up. There arose the conception of a primal God, high above all other gods. With this primal God the soul of man was linked. All this was at bottom monotheistic and conducive to the spread of Christianity.

3. On Gentile Soil.

The early group of disciples described in the Book of Acts apparently had no intention of severing their traditional religious connections with Judaism. At first they had no thought of starting a new movement outside the pale of Judaism. "We are the true Israel", they asserted. They reasoned "out of the Scriptures" that Jesus was the Christ. Luke hastens to assure Theophilus that the new religion had the full authority of antiquity. "Loyalty to the religion of their fathers is one of the best-attested characteristics of the first Christians", says Case. "The message they preached was intended by them primarily, if not exclusively, for Israelites, and its fulfillment was to be the perfect realization of Israel's long-deferred hope." (9) It was only after the Jews had consistently rejected the Gospel (9) Case - Evolution of Early Christianity. p.124.

But even more important than this was the process of religious evolution which was going on throughout the world. There was a blending of religions. To explain the origin of the world and the soul a system of ideas, intermediate between, soul-body, and deliverance from it. These ideas were a combination of a primal God, high above all other gods, with this primal God the soul of man was linked. All this was at bottom sympathetic and continuous in the spirit of evolution.

3. On the Evolution of Religion

The early group of religions described in the book of Acts apparently had no intention of reversing their position. At first they had no thought of starting a new movement outside the pale of Judaism. "We are the same Israel," they asserted. They reasoned "out of the scriptures" that Jesus was the Christ. John declares to sum up their view that the new religion was the full authority of Judaism. "Loyal to the religion of their fathers is one of the best-attested characteristics of the first Christians," says Cass. "The message they preached was introduced by them primarily, it was undoubtedly, the Judaism, and the fulfillment was in the natural evolution of Israel's long-delayed hope." (1) It was only after the Jews had consistently rejected the Gospel (2) Cass - Evolution of World Religions, p. 184.

that the early Christians turned gradually and hesitatingly to gentile territory.

It was not long before the Jews began to persecute the followers of Jesus. In the year 33 or 34, about two years after the day of Pentecost, Stephen was stoned. This incident was but a signal for the more general persecution which was to follow. The man who was to carry on the work of persecution more systematically was present at the stoning, holding the coats of those who threw the stones. But the martyrdom, instead of quieting the followers of Jesus, only added fuel to the flame. The result was a more decided step in opening the doors of the Church to the Gentiles. The Christian community at Jerusalem was scattered but they took the message of Jesus with them. Philip went to a city in Samaria and preached with much success. Peter and John gave their sanction to the work. While the Samaritans believed in the law of Moses and were circumcised they were, nevertheless, regarded as an heretical sect by the orthodox Jews. Their reception into the Christian faith paved the way towards the preaching of the Gospel to heathens themselves.

A second step leading to the Gentile mission was the experience of the Apostle Peter with the Roman Centurion, Cornelius. While he was praying one day on a housetop he had a vision. He saw a great white sheet let down from heaven upon which were all kinds of things to eat. He was commanded

that the early Christians found themselves in a position of
incomplete certainty.

It was not long before the Jews began to persecute the
followers of Jesus. In the year 33 A.D., about two years
after the day of Pentecost, Stephen was accused. This inci-
dent was not a signal for the more general persecution which
was to follow. The Jews did not begin to persecute the
Christian community systematically until the following year.

During the course of those who threw the stones, and the
persecution, instead of persecuting the followers of Jesus, they
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their assistance to the work. While the Gentiles believed in
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regarded as an inferior class by the orthodox Jews. Their
conversion into the Christian faith paved the way for the
conversion of the world to the Christian religion.

A second step leading to the Gentile mission was the ex-
istence of the Jewish faith with the Roman Empire.
Constantine, while he was paying the day on a vacation, he had
a vision. He saw a light which shone from the heavens
and voices were all kinds of things to him. He was convinced

to eat but he refused, saying that he would eat nothing common or unclean. Then came the words: "What God hath cleansed make not thou common". (10) In this experience Peter was convinced that it was not unlawful to eat with a Gentile. He saw that God was no respecter of persons and that the heavenly good offered in the Gospel was for all people who would receive it. A very good occasion for the application of the meaning of his vision was supplied in the person of Cornelius.

But the brethren at Jerusalem were not prepared for this Catholic proceeding of Peter. This new interpretation of the Gospel was a matter for deep consideration. So they demanded an explanation. Whereupon Peter explained that the Holy Spirit was ~~given~~ ^gto the Gentile believers as well as to Jewish believers, and in the same measure. This argument was sufficient to satisfy the scruples of the Judaizers in the Christian community.

But Peter was not the only one who was breaking the bonds of Judaism with an appeal of the Gospel to the Gentile world. After the death of Stephen many of the Christian fugitives from Jerusalem traveled as far as Cyprus and Antioch. Many of these confined their preaching to the Jews. Others, chiefly by Hellenistic Jews who had been converted to the Gospel, preached to the Grecians who were heathen. And their work

(10) Matthew 10:15.

was not in vain. Large numbers believed. Antioch was the center of these new converts. When the news of this work reached the Jerusalem church the elders sent Barnabas to look after it.

The greatest personality to engage in the work of freeing Christianity from Judaism and promoting its expansion to the Gentile world was Paul. He may rightly be called "the Apostle to the Gentiles". After his conversion and stay in Arabia Paul was received by Barnabas as a co-worker in the Church at Antioch. From this place he set out on his first missionary campaign to Cyprus and the southern districts of Asia Minor. His method of procedure was to preach first to the Jews in the synagogues. When they would not listen to him any longer he turned to the Gentiles. All Gentiles who believed were received without the imposition of the Mosaic law. This caused another rift between the Jewish Christians who insisted upon obedience to the law and those who, like Paul, considered it unnecessary to salvation. The matter came to a head in the so-called Apostolic Council. Paul appeared at Jerusalem to represent his position against those who insisted that all Gentile converts submit to the rite of circumcision. The Judaizers in the Christian community held to this act as the requisite to salvation. Paul disputed this contention. He described the effect of the Gospel upon the Gentile converts and how they too were recipients of the

was not in vain. Large numbers followed. Another was the
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after it.

The principal object of the voyage in the name of the
the Christianization of the Indians and teaching the knowledge to
the people which was then. We say rightly is called the
progress in the Pacific. After his conversion and after his
arrival he was received as a co-member in the
Church at Antioch. From this time he was not at his first
ecclesiastical position to which he and the apostle returned at
Antioch. The matter of ecclesiastical was to reach there in
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came to a head in the so-called Jerusalem Council. When
arrived at Antioch he persuaded the Jewish against those
who insisted that all Gentile converts should be circumcised
and observed the Law. The decision in the Jerusalem Council was
in favor of the Gentiles in matters of ceremonial law and
this decision. It decided the effect of the Council was
the Gentile converts and not they were recipients of the

Holy Spirit. To strengthen his case he took with him to Jerusalem a Gentile convert by the name of Titus. The issue before the Council was an important one. Profound implications were connected with it. If Paul was right then the real ground of salvation did not rest upon observance of the law, even for Jewish Christians, but on believing trust in Jesus. It meant the complete separation of Christianity from Judaism. The matter was finally decided in favor of Paul. They agreed that Paul was doing a great work of God among the Gentiles. The right hand of fellowship was given to Paul and Barnabas and the blessing of God was invoked upon their work. The logical conclusion of this decision was the final separation of Christianity from the bonds of Judaism.

One other controversy arose after this time in regards to the relations between Gentile and Jewish converts. The occasion for this controversy was the inconsistency of Peter. In keeping with his experience with Cornelius, Peter did not hesitate to sit down with the Gentile brethren at the Love-feasts and eat with them. But there came a time when certain persons in the Jerusalem Church came to Antioch from James. These men did not approve of the free intercourse of Jewish Christians with the uncircumcised which had been practiced by Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. The presence of these Jewish Christians from Jerusalem caused Peter, in

...to strengthen his case he took with him to Jerusalem a Gentile convert by the name of Titus. The Jews before the Council saw an important case. Titus was a Christian, even for Jewish Christians, but an unbelieving Jew in law. It seems the Council was divided on this point. The Gentiles, the leaders were finally decided in favor of Paul. They agreed that Paul was doing a great work of God among the Gentiles. The right hand of fellowship was given to Paul and Barnabas and the blessing of God was invoked upon their work. The logical conclusion of this decision was the final separation of Christianity from the bonds of Judaism.

One other controversy arose after this time in regard to the relations between Gentile and Jewish converts. The occasion for this controversy was the inconsistency of Peter in dealing with his experience with Cornelius. Peter did not hesitate to sit down with the Gentile brethren at the table. He ate with them. But there came a time when he was returned to the Jerusalem Church as an Apostle. Then why did not members of the Jerusalem Church of Jewish Christians with the understanding which had been witnessed by Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. The presence of these Jewish Christians from Jerusalem caused Peter, in

timid deference to their feelings in the matter, to cease eating with the Gentiles as he had done before. Following his example, the other Jewish Christians at Antioch, including Barnabas, did the same thing. Such action on the part of Peter would have a very strong tendency to make the Gentile converts conform to the ceremonial ordinances of the law and thus destroy their liberty and hinder the spread of Christianity among the Gentiles. Paul was quick to detect the significance of this matter and proceeded to condemn Peter for his inconsistency and infidelity to his real convictions. Once again Paul came to the defense of the Gentile converts and saved the religion of Jesus from the narrowness of orthodox Judaism.

With the destruction of the temple in the year 70, Judaism lost its most strategic stronghold and therefore declined in whatever influence it had exercised upon the Christian faith movement. From this time on Christianity became more predominantly Gentile. Jewish membership gradually diminished in numbers and importance. Christian communities flourished, not in Palestine, but on Gentile soil. "Its prospects of further success now lay exclusively in its power to perpetuate itself through appeal to the non-Jewish population of the Roman Empire. Unless it had been able to integrate itself successfully as a movement in Gentile society, its hope of survival would have been in vain." (11)

(11) Case - The Social Origin of Christianity. p.68.

that reference to their position in the world, to their
 living with the Gentiles as he had done before. Following
 his example, the other Jewish Christians at Antioch, including
 the women, did the same thing. But action on the part
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 geographically and geographically. Jewish religious practices
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 to flourish, not in Palestine, but on Gentile soil. The
 progress of further conquest was by Christianity in its early
 centuries. It is through apostles to the non-Jewish world
 that the Gospel came. Hence it has been said that the
 history of Christianity is a history of Gentile conquest.
 The name of apostle would have been in vain. (2)

(2) Case - The Gospel of Christianity, p. 20.

4. The Missionary Activity of St. Paul.

"Historically, Paul the Pharisee dethroned the people and the religion of Israel; he tore the Gospel from its Jewish soil and rooted it in the soil of humanity". (12) In these words, Harnack describes the place of the Apostle Paul in the expansion of early Christianity. His unique contribution to the expansion and development of Christianity in the first century deserves special attention. Reference has already been made to his work in sponsoring the cause of the Gentile Christians as over against the Jewish Christians who insisted upon obedience to the law. It remains for us to consider in more detail his missionary campaigns by which he laid the solid and living foundations of the Gospel throughout the greater part of Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia.

After his conversion on the road to Damascus Paul spent three years in Arabia, probably thinking out the implications of his experience and new decision. After this he came back to Damascus but was forced to flee on account of the hostility of the Jews. He went to Jerusalem where he spent about two weeks in conference with Peter. The time of this meeting and the circumstances surrounding it make the occasion significant both for Paul and for the new religion he was about to take to the Gentiles. From Jerusalem Paul went to Tarsus, his native city. Tarsus was a city of learning and philosophy.

(12) Harnack - The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries. pp. 64, 65.

To this environment he owed much of his cosmopolitan spirit.

In the year 43, Paul went to Antioch to help Barnabas in the work of converting the heathen which was carried on with great success. It is significant that the disciples were called Christians for the first time at Antioch. There the followers of Jesus first became a body distinct from the Jews.

At Antioch the first mission to distant lands was organized. According to Acts the mission was undertaken in keeping with a command of the Holy Spirit to the leaders in the Church at Antioch. "Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them". (13) These two men, together with John Mark who was a cousin or nephew of Barnabas, went down to Seleucia, a seaport town, and sailed for the island of Cyprus. They traveled the whole length of the island from Salamis to Paphos. Two interesting incidents are recorded for us. The one was his meeting with the sorcerer Bar-Jesus which gives a striking example of the superstition of the age. Throughout the empire were large numbers of men like Bar-Jesus who skilfully deceived the people and extracted large sums of money from them by capitalizing upon their ignorance. When Paul met this man it is not strange that he denounced him in no uncertain terms and demonstrated to the people the superior power of Christianity. The other incident was Paul's interview with the proconsul Sergius Paulus.

(13) Acts 13:2.

What was said is not known but we do know that the proconsul was greatly impressed. Luke says that he "believed". Whether that means that he was actually converted to the Christian faith or that he was just favorably ~~im~~pressed cannot be decided. It seems natural to suppose, however, that the incident meant a great deal to Paul. Mc Giffert suggests that "it is not impossible that the impression which he made upon the governor led him to turn his thoughts more earnestly than heretofore upon the Roman Empire as the field of his labors, and to cherish a more confident belief in the possibility of bringing the Roman world to Christ". (14) At any rate, the event is consistent with the great aim of his life to win the whole Roman Empire for Christ.

Leaving Cyprus, Paul and his companions sailed for Perga, a town of Pamphylia. At this point in the journey John Mark left them and went to Jerusalem. Mark's reason for doing this is uncertain. Perhaps there was a change in the plans which he did not anticipate. The thing did not please Paul at all but they continued their journey without him. From Perga they went to Antioch of Phrygia and then turned southeastward into the province of Galatia, visiting the towns of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. In these places the missionaries preached in the synagogues each Sabbath. Their success among the Jews was not so great. Among the Jewish proselytes (14)Mc Giffert - History of christianity in the Apostolic Age. p.175.

and even among the actual pagans their efforts were attended with greater success. Paul's method was to preach first in the synagogues. When they banished him from the synagogues he turned to private homes or any other place where he could preach his message to those who would listen. In each town the missionaries left behind them a small Christian community, separate from the Jewish communities, and organized under the guidance of "elders" appointed by them to superintend the work. They returned to Antioch where they were warmly welcomed by the Church.

It was after this first missionary journey that the question of circumcision arose in the church at Antioch which was settled at Jerusalem. This has been discussed in a previous section in this chapter and there is no need to go into it again.

Soon after the Jerusalem Conference Paul set out on his second missionary journey. Instead of Barnabas, his companion this time was Silas, a distinguished Christian from Jerusalem. As he passed through Lycaonia Paul found another valuable assistant in a young man by the name of Timothy. Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. To avoid any unnecessary trouble Paul had him circumcised. Going through Phrygia and Galatia he came to Troas in Mysia. From here he sailed to Macedonia where he visited such cities as Philippi, Thessalonica, and other places. He then

went down to Athens where he stayed only a short time. His next stop was Corinth where he stayed for eighteen months (53-54 A.D.). The second missionary journey was completed by passing through Ephesus and Caesarea in Palestine to Antioch.

It is interesting to note the difference between Paul's approach to religion at Athens and his approach to religion at Corinth. At Athens he based his appeal upon the moral and religious consciousness of humanity. His line of argument was predominantly philosophical. It was in keeping with his principle of "becoming all things to all men, that I may by all means save some". But the response at Athens was negative. We have a record of two converts, one a member of the Council of Areopagus, the other a female by the name of Damaris. Apparently Paul was a bit discouraged with the reaction of the Athenians, for he did not stay long in their city. He went on to Corinth where he met great success. Undoubtedly it was due, in part, to his change of approach. Some of it was due to the fact that Athens and Corinth were two very difficult cities. But there was something more. When Paul reached Corinth he changed his message. These are his words: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified". (15) This is the true Gospel which had power to change the lives of individuals and the

(15) I Corinthians 2:2.

whole Roman world. It is still the heart and power of the Gospel and no philosophical approach to or explanation of Christianity can take its place.

Not much time intervened between the second and third journeys. Leaving Antioch again he passed through Asia Minor to Ephesus where he remained for three years. (55--57A.D.) He was fortunate in having two helpers in this city whom he had met at Corinth on the preceeding trip, Aquila and Priscilla. This man and his wife had received the gospel through the preaching of Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, who knew only the baptism of John. The disciples made by Apollos became the nucleus of the Ephesian Church. As a result of Paul's preaching in the synagoue and elsewhere the number of believers increased greatly. From Ephesus as a center the Gospel then was extended to the surrounding towns and villages in Asia Minor. After three years Paul decided to go back to Jerusalem, but not until he had again visited the churches in Macédonia and Achaia. He/wintered at Corinth (57*458 A.D) and in the following spring, after passing through Macedonia, set sail for Palestine. He arrived in Jerusalem in the year 58 A.D.

At Jerusalem he got into trouble with the Jewish zealots who raised an uproar when they found him in the Temple. He would probably have met death here if it had not been for the commander of the Roman garrison who protected Paul from

ROMAN PATRICKSON AND ASSOCIATES

these religious fanatics. He was taken to Caesarea and was tried before Felix, but not convicted. Finally, after being kept two years at Caesarea, Paul appealed to his right as a Roman citizen to be judged by the Emperor. He was then sent to Rome.

Paul suffered many things on these journeys, hunger, scourgings, stonings, shipwrecks, "stripes above measure"(16) In the end he was a martyr. That was the price this great soul paid for his faith in Jesus Christ and his eager desire to share it with others.

(16) II Corinthians 11:23f.

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CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

1. The Need of Written Documents.

Unlike most other faiths, Christianity did not begin as a book religion. The New Testament writings were not the cause but the product of the faith of the first Christian believers. When the time came for the Apostles to carry on the work of their Lord they did not begin by formulating creeds or writing histories. They began witnessing to the vital power of Christ in their lives and calling all men to believe in Him. The thought of writing down a record of the life of Jesus did not at first enter their minds because they were anxiously expecting the return of Jesus in the very near future. They had no time to write down rules for the guidance of His Church on earth since His return to the earth was immanent.

This does not mean that there were no fragmentary records at an early date. It is probable that collections of Christ's words were in existence during His lifetime. For the most part, however, the exponents of the new religion depended upon oral tradition and oral teaching for the purposes of edification and missionary effort.

But the passing of time brought new problems to bear on the situation. As Christianity expanded it became necessary that the Apostles keep in touch with the distant communities through written correspondence. There arose the need of

further instruction in the faith to counteract the rise of erroneous and heretical teaching. Furthermore, doubts arose with the passing of time in regards to the return of Jesus. If the return of Jesus were to be delayed the need of handing down to coming generations a faithful record of the life and teaching of Jesus became apparent. "An authentic written record of the words and acts of Jesus and His disciples was therefore absolutely indispensable, not indeed to originate the church, but to keep it from corruption and to furnish it with a pure standard of faith and discipline." (1)

n Most of the books of the New Testament were written between the years 50 and 70, which means that our very earliest records were written at least twenty years after the resurrection of Jesus. All of St. Paul's epistles except the Pastoral letters, fall within the years 53 and 62. These writings of the Apostle must have been collected at an early date since both Clement and Polycarp appear to have had access to them in their collected form.

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament fall rather readily into three different classifications: historical, didactic and prophetic. The Gospels and Acts belong to the historical group, the epistles to the didactic, and Revelation to the prophetic. Although this is not the chronological order, it does correspond with the natural progress

(1) Schaff - History of the Christian Church. Vol. I. p.571.

of the Christian revelation.

2. Epistles of Paul

The Epistles of Paul, like the writings of the other Apostles, were supplementary to his oral teaching. They are thirteen in number and were called forth by emergencies, like the troubles in the Church at Corinth or Paul's inability to visit Rome at a time when he was needed. Each new congregation had its own trials and dangers, needs which the Apostle hastened to answer by letter when he could not be there in person. A few of the Pauline Epistles are addressed to individuals, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Several of them were written while in prison but they, nevertheless, breathe the spirit of faith, hope, and joy. He was completely devoted to his churches and was willing to undergo any hardship or sacrifice for the people whom "he had led from the darkness of heathen idolatry and Jewish bigotry to the light of Christian truth and freedom".

To the Church at Thessalonica Paul wrote two affectionate letters from Corinth during his first sojourn in that city (52 or 53 A.D.). He wrote to the Thessalonians to comfort them in their trials and to remove an undue anxiety in regards to the glorious return of Christ. Their anxiety over the near advent tended to break up the normal life of the community even to the extent of becoming demoralizing. Paul wrote to them saying that the Lord would not return as soon as they

had expected and urged them to live soberly and orderly.

Paul wrote at least two Epistles to the Corinthians. The first one was written in Ephesus in the year 57 A.D. It was an answer to several perplexing questions which disturbed the peace of the congregation. The Apostle warned against the carnal impurity for which the city was noted. He also gave advice concerning marriage and celibacy and concerning meat sacrificed to idols; he corrects the abuses connected with the Lord's Supper and explains the doctrine of the resurrection. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written later in the same year. It is largely auto-biographical and is a defense of his own ministry and work which the Judaizing party at Corinth had tried to undermine.

The Epistle to the Galatians was written after Paul's second visit to them. The occasion for this letter was the work of Judaizing teachers. They questioned Paul's apostolic authority and insisted upon circumcision as a requirement to full membership in the Church. Paul answers with a strong defense of his apostleship and exhorts the brethren to hold fast to the freedom of the Gospel without abusing it. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love". (2)

The Epistle to the Romans was written just before his final visit to Jerusalem. The letter was sent as a forerunner (2) Galatians 5:6.

mer to his intended personal visit. The theme of the Epistle is the "power of God unto salvation". It is comprehensive and systematic and well adapted to the people to whom it was addressed. To the Romans who were the rulers of the world Paul pictures Christianity as the power of God which was destined to conquer even Rome.

The four Epistles, to the Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, and Philippians, were written during his confinement in Rome from 61-63 A.D. The occasion which called forth the letter to the Colossians was the rise of a new heresy which contained the essential features of Gnosticism. It was a mixture of Jewish ritual, heathen speculation, and oriental mysticism. They observed the worship of subordinate beings and held to an antagonism between God and matter. Paul refuted this false philosophy by the true doctrine of the Person of Christ as the only Mediator between God and man. He pointed to faith and love in Christ as the way to the cure of all moral evil. Their false ascetism could not do this.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is a doctrinal exposition of the idea of the church as the spotless bride of Christ and the mystical body of Christ. Christ is reflected in the church. "Ephesians is the most churchly book of the New Testament," says Schaff. (3) But its churchliness is centered in Christ as the head of the Church. "It is the Epistle of (3) Schaff - History of the Christian Church. Vol. I. p.779.

the Heavenlies, a solemn liturgy, an ode to Christ and His spotless bride, the Song of Songs in the New Testament." (4)

The Epistle to the Philippians is personal and autobiographic. The church at Philippi was most loyal to Paul. His attachment to it was very close and intimate. So the letter overflows with love and gratitude. There is no doctrinal error to correct nor vice to condemn. His only warning is against the champions of circumcision who tried to wreck the work of the Apostle continually.

The Epistle to Philemon was a private letter written by Paul to one of his converts asking him to take back a poor runaway slave, not as a slave but as a brother in Christ since all men are brothers in Christ Jesus. The letter is significant for its courtesy, delicacy, and tenderness of feeling.

The Pastoral Epistles are three in number, two to Timothy and one to Titus. They represent the final stage of the Apostle's life and work. In them we have his advice to his beloved disciples and fellow-workers. They contain his pastoral theology and his theory of church government. They give directions for governing churches and for the proper treatment of individual members, all the way from widows to heretics.

It is uncertain who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The prevailing opinion from the fourth to the eighteenth
(4) Schaff - History of the Christian Church. Vol I. p.780

century was to ascribe its authorship to Paul. In more recent times this has been seriously questioned. But the obscurity which surrounds its origin does not detract from its importance. The Epistle was addressed to the Hebrew Christians in Palestine. The object was to warn them against the danger of apostasy to Judaism and to show the infinite superiority of Christianity.

3. The Gospels.

There are four canonical Gospels, each dealing with the same general theme. They do not represent full biographies of Christ's life but only certain phases of His life which appealed to the writer and suited his purpose in writing. Of the commonly accepted thirty or more years which made up the earthly life of our Lord, we have a record of incidents which covers only about forty days. Undoubtedly, the chief reason for this was the limited sources at the disposal of the Gospel writers. Nevertheless they give us sufficient material to formulate a clear and definite picture of the life and work of Christ.

Matthew wrote for the Jews and accordingly portrayed Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and Lawgiver of the kingdom of heaven. Mark is supposed to have written for the Romans and he gives incidents from the life of Jesus which create the impression that He was a great conqueror and worker of miracles. Luke wrote for the Greeks and in his

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Gospels Jesus is the sympathizing Friend of humanity and the Saviour of all men. John wrote much later than the three Synoptists and thus represents an advanced conception of the life and work of Jesus. In the fourth Gospel Jesus is the eternal Son of God who became flesh for our salvation.

The oldest Gospel is that of Mark which was written about 60 A.D. That was about thirty years after Christ's earthly life had ended. During those thirty intervening years an oral tradition had come into existence which tended to become stereotyped by the church. This oral tradition was organized and formulated into a more or less definite body of Gospel material to be used for teaching purposes. In addition to the oral tradition there were probably various written excerpts from the life of Jesus. The briefer sayings of Jesus, an account of some of His miracles, and the story of the crucifixion were probably reduced to writing at a very early date. When Mark came to write he would combine the written fragments with the oral tradition to make a complete story of the life of Jesus.

When Matthew and Luke began to write their accounts they had Mark as a source. In addition to Mark they must have had another source which scholars have called the "Logia" or Q. Although Q is not in existence it is a necessary hypothesis to explain the Synoptic material not found in Mark. It is generally agreed that Matthew and Mark wrote

ten or fifteen years after Mark. Schaff holds that Matthew and Luke were both written before 70 A.D. He bases his claim on the fact that both Synoptists describe the destruction of Jerusalem as an event to take place in the future. "Had the evangelists written after that terrible catastrophe, they would naturally have made some allusion to it, or so arranged the eschatological discourses of our Lord as to enable the reader clearly to discriminate between the judgment of Jerusalem and the final judgment of the world, as typically foreshadowed by the former". (5) At any rate, they were written during the seventh or eighth decade of the first century.

The Fourth Gospel was written much later than the Synoptic Gospels, probably about the close of the first century of our Christian era. An examination of its subject matter reveals that it belongs at least to the second generation of Christians. Traces of the Gospel are to be found in the writings of Justin, Polycarp, and Ignatius.

The outstanding element in this Gospel is the doctrine of the Logos. The Divine Logos is identified with Christ as the only Son of God who is of the same nature with God. He is the original agent in the creation of the world and the bearer of light and life to all men. He was the primal Logos who was with God from the beginning and who

(5) Schaff - History of the Christian Church. Vol I. p.583.

Became flesh that we might know God. This is an advanced conception of Christ and is derived from the philosophy of Philo.

4. Other Writings.

The Apocalypse was written by a prophet by the name of John who seems to have had some definite connection to the churches in Asia and Phrygia. The book was written on the little island of Patmos where the author was in exile for the Faith. There has been much discussion as to whether the author was the Apostle John. He never refers to himself as an Apostle. Yet St. Justin who wrote in the first half of the second century did not hesitate to attribute the work to the Apostle by that name. The book reveals the rising tide of oppression at the hands of the Roman state and the way in which Christians were encouraged to meet it. The words, "He that endureth unto the end", are like a mighty refrain which echoes throughout the whole book. In the end there is to be victory for Christ and the Church. The Roman power is to be broken and Rome itself, that great mistress of the world, is to fall before the victorious army of Christ. The Lord will judge the whole world. Then follows Christ's earthly kingdom which is to last one thousand years. At the end of this period is another great conflict after which comes the new heaven and the new earth.

In all probability the Apocalypse was written during

because though that we might know God. This is an advanced
 revelation of Christ and is derived from the philosophy of

General Principles

The philosophy was written by a person of the rank of
 John who would be very far from being a philosopher in the
 ordinary sense of the word. The work was written on the
 basis of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle and is a guide for
 the student. There is a very small introduction as to whether
 the author was the Aristotle. He never refers to him-
 self as an Aristotle. But Aristotle was known in the first
 half of the second century and not hesitate to ascribe
 the work to the Aristotle of that name. The work reveals the
 rising tide of corruption at the end of the second century
 and the way in which Christians were encouraged to resist it.
 The words, "The world is not to be loved," are the key
 to the teaching which is given throughout the whole book. In
 the end there is to be victory for Christ and the Church.
 The work never is as he himself says, "The world is not
 to be loved," is to tell before the Christian
 must be converted. The Lord will have the whole world. "The
 Kingdom of Christ is a kingdom which is to last for ever-
 and ever. It is the end of this world is another great con-
 dition after which comes the new heaven and the new earth.
 In all this philosophy the author has written nothing

the reign of Domitian. At that time Caesar - worship had become prevalent in the empire. Of all the detestable things in heathenism this was the worst and it was the very point at which the Christian faith was to clash with the Roman state. This is the historical situation behind the book which makes it significant in our study of the conflict between Christianity and heathenism.

The seven Epistles of James, First and Second Peter, First, Second, and Third John, and Jude are the so-called Catholic Epistles. They are not addressed to individuals or single congregations as the letters of Paul were. They are addressed to a larger number of Christians scattered throughout a district or over the whole world. Thus they are of a more general character than the Pauline Epistles. For this reason they have been called the Catholic Epistles ever since the time of Origen and Eusebius. The time of their composition cannot be fixed definitely but it is probable that they were all written within the thirty years following the middle of the first century. On each of them is the general imprint of the Apostolic Age.

These books, twenty-seven in all, make up the New Testament. In them we have the story of the beginning and early development of the Christian faith movement. These books did not produce the new faith but the new faith produced these books. They came into existence to meet the needs of

CHAPTER II.

the growing Christian community. These writings were soon looked upon as divinely inspired and carrying final authority. Thus these sacred writings became a guide for the Church and a means of preserving its individuality against the inroads of heathenism and heresy.

the growing Christian community. These efforts were seen
looking upon as divinely inspired and supernatural action.
1st. These things marked a turning point in the
Church and a means of receiving its full identity against
the forces of paganism and heresy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN
CHRISTIANITY AND HEATHENISM.1. Elements in Christianity Which Gave Rise to Persecution.

The Christians looked upon the heathen world with an eye of disfavor. They felt compelled to withdraw themselves from the domestic and public life of the heathen. This feeling of segregation asserted itself most clearly in regards to the public amusements of the Romans. In their origin and arrangements the public shows were based on idolatry. The games were held in honor of the deities. All the decorations of the circus were emblems of heathenism. The cruelty of the gladiatorial combats was a thing which Christians viewed with abhorance. The immodesty of the theatre, the folly and frivolity of the contests offended their sobriety. This attitude of the Christians toward heathen amusements was a source of irritation between the two groups.

Many Christians refused to hold civil offices or render military service. An active interest in the affairs the State was altogether lacking in some instances. It is hardly any wonder that they soon had a reputation for being bad citizens. They were criticized for their lack of energy and their withdrawal from ordinary life. It is probable that this fact was partly responsible for the charge, "haters of humanity". "The Christians", writes Uhlhorn, "passed with the heathen as a race averse to all that is great, fair, and

noble in our humanity, as even hostile to it, and haters of mankind". (1)

The secret meetings of the Christians in which both sexes assembled stirred up a great deal of hatred. The heathen attributed evil motives to the devotee and accused them of being guilty of the same evil practices which were current in certain mystery cults, notorious for their vice and immorality. In their assemblies Christians were accused of eating human flesh and drinking human blood. Caecilius leaves this awful accusation: "The story about the imitation of novices is as much to be tested as it is well known. An infant covered over with meal, that it may deceive the unwary, is placed before the neoponites. This infant is slain by the young pupil, with dark and secret wounds, he being urged on as if to harmless blows on the surface of the meal. Thirstily -- O horror! -- they lick up its blood; eagerly they divide its limbs; by this victim they are pledged together; with this consciousness of wickedness they are covenanted to mutual silence". The strange thing is that people believed such stories.

Furthermore, the majority of believers were members of the poor and less intelligent classes of society. This in itself was enough to arouse the dislike of the educated and the rich.

(1)Uhlhorn - Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism. p.229.

But these reasons are not sufficient to explain why the Christians came to be persecuted. Persecution arose chiefly as a result of the Christian conception of the State. Their allegiance to the States was secondary to their allegiance to God. This was a sure source of trouble. For Christians there was but one King, the invisible Christ. They were willing to obey any civil requirement which did not impair their full and final loyalty to Him. But when the civil authority attempted to usurp the prerogatives which belonged only to their spiritual King, who was Christ, that was going too far. To pay divine homage to the Emperor was the one step which a true Christian could not take.

It was considered the duty of every citizen to honor the national gods and to obey the State in religious matters as in all others. To the pagan the State was supreme in every phase of human life. He could not conceive of an individual refusing to obey the laws of the State in order to satisfy his own conscience or for the sake of loyalty to his God. The State itself was divine. This theocratic tendency culminated in the worship of the emperors. Every citizen was expected to strew incense to the Emperor. To refuse to observe this rite was to oppose the State and was therefore regarded as an act of high treason. Christians were traitors. Could anything stir up hatred and opposition quicker than this?

Uhlhorn refers to this interesting and concrete incident between a certain Proconsul and the martyr Achatius. (B) "You ought to love our princes", said the Proconsul, "as becometh a man who lives under the laws of the Roman Empire". Achatius answered: "By whom is the Emperor more loved than by the Christians? We supplicate for him unceasingly a long life, a just government of his peoples, a peaceful reign, prosperity for the army and for the whole world". "Good", replied the Proconsul, "but in order to prove your obedience, sacrifice with us to his honor." Achatius answered: "I pray to God for my Emperor, but a sacrifice neither he should require nor we pay. Who may offer divine honor to a man?" Upon this declaration he was sentenced to death. This incident is typical of what must have happened thousands of times. To endure such persecution certainly was not pleasant, but if they had obeyed in this one particular Christians would have renounced their religion in its very essence. The right to obey the conscience and to be loyal to God in the face of all rivals was one of the distinctive characteristics of the Christian faith.

Christianity differed from the other religions of the Empire in that it claimed to be a universal and absolute religion. The heathen religions were distinctly national but Christianity was a religion of salvation for all nations.

(2) Uhlhorn - Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism. p.234

It claimed to have the final revelation from God, the perfect truth, the only way to salvation. It was absolute and this was the thing which the Roman world could not tolerate. "The conflict was for nothing less than the dominion of the world", writes Uhlhorn. "From its nature it could only end in the complete victory of one side or the other".(3)

3. Persecution Under Nero.

The attack upon Christianity by the State was delayed for some time because the heathen world was at first unable to distinguish the Christians from the Jews. The Christian brotherhoods passed continually with the Romans for Jewish associations and thus they remained unmolested. This misunderstanding on the part of the heathen world could not continue, however, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the complete overthrow of the Jewish State. After this it became evident that Christianity was, indeed, a third religion by the side of heathenism and Judaism.

Christianity thus became an outlaw religion. This development took place under Nero, Domitian, and Trajan. From that time on it was only a matter of enforcing the law. We are concerned here only with this earlier development.

The persecution under Nero took place in the year A.D. 64. The chief source of our information in this matter is Tacitus (52-117). Although not an eye-witness, his account (3)Uhlhorn- Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism, p.218.

is trustworthy because of his fine reputation as a searcher for facts. In his Annales he gives this account."Neither by works of benevolence nor the gifts of the prince nor means of appeasing the gods did the shameful suspicion cease, so that it was not believed that the fire had been caused by his command. Therefore, to overcome this rumor, Nero put in his own place as culprits, and punished with most ingenious cruelty, men whom the common people hated for their shameful crimes and called Christians..... A vast multitude was convicted, not so much of arson as of hatred of the human race. And they were not only put to death, but subjected to insults, in that they were either dressed up in the skins of wild beasts and perished by the cruel mingling of dogs, or else put on crosses to be set on fire, and, as day declined, to be burned, being used as lights by nights. Nero had thrown open his gardens for that spectacle". (2)

According to Tacitus the occasion for the rise of the Neronian persecution was the great fire which destroyed a large part of Rome. The populace suspected the emperor. In order to free himself from suspicion Nero put the blame upon the Christians. This was not hard to do since there was such a general hatred of the new sect. Christians were considered enemies of society and the charge put upon them by (4)Ayer - Source Book for Ancient Church History. pp.6,7.

the Emperor of plotting the destruction of Rome was indeed credible to heathen ears. Christians were immediately hunted out and charged on two different points, incendiarism and hostility to civilized society.

At first popular feeling was in favor of the persecution. But when it became so cruel and outrageous popular sympathy turned again toward the Christians. The persecution began in 64 and probably came to an end in 66 when Nero left Rome. The Emperor had carried it to such limits that the people had become sick of it.

At the time of the Neronian persecution, Christianity had not yet become an outlaw religion. Christians were looked upon with disfavor and even disgust but their religion had not yet been officially declared an enemy of the State. The persecution was probably confined to Rome and there is no evidence that it was a general persecution. It does not represent a carefully planned attempt to suppress Christianity. It was only an outburst of hatred which died away when the occasion which called it forth was forgotten. But there were forebodings in this first attack of heathenism upon Christianity. Thoughtful Christians must have realized its true meaning and looked into the future to see more trouble ahead. Truly, "the Heroic Age of the Christian Church had begun, a heroism not of action, but of a suffering mightier than all deeds".(5)

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(5)Uhlhorn - Conflict of Christianity With Heathenism.p.248

3. Persecution Under Domitian.

The second Emperor to persecute the Christians was Domitian (81-96). This does not mean that Christians were not persecuted from the time of Nero to the reign of Domitian. Rather it is to be assumed that the persecution was more or less continuous, breaking out at different periods with increasing vigor. True, our documents give us no evidence of any outburst of persecution between the rule of Nero and that of Domitian. But this silence on the part of historians is not conclusive that persecution had ceased, as Ramsay clearly points out. Christians in the first century were so absorbed in life, in teaching, and the approaching end of the world that the ordinary events of life were soon forgotten. Only those periods of persecution were remembered which were more furious and exciting in nature. (6) The attitude of the State toward the Christians during this whole period could not be better described than in the words of Mommsen: "The persecution of the Christians was a standing matter, as was that of robbers".

The persecutions under Domitian were short, taking place towards the close of his reign. The only pagan writer who mentions the punishments inflicted by Domitian for religious purposes is Dion Cassius. This author states that Flavius Clemens, consul A.D. 95 and cousin of the Emperor, was ex-

(6) Ramsay - The Church in the Roman Empire. Op. Cit. p.277.

ecuted after being condemned on a charge of sacrilege. His wife Domitilla was exiled. Many others were put to death or deprived of their property on the same charge. Dion states that these people had gone astray after the manner of the Jews. The consensus of opinion is that the people here referred to were Christians or at least connected with Christians. It is certain that Clemens and Domitilla suffered as Christians.

According to Hegesippus, Domitian heard reports that some of the relatives of Jesus were still living in Palestine. They were two grandsons of Judas, the brother of Jesus. He was terrified at the news and immediately summoned the two men to appear before him. When they informed the Emperor that they were farmers and assured him that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, they were dismissed without suffering any harm.

By the beginning of the second century the separation between Christianity and Judaism had become so complete that even the heathen could see the difference between them. Christianity became a third party by the side of Heathenism and Judaism. This put the new faith in a difficult situation since it no longer enjoyed the protection it had formerly received when viewed as a sect of Judaism. The moment the State recognized Christianity as a separate religion, it became an illegal religion. No specific laws

against it were at first laid down. The treatment of Christians differed with the different governors. But the new religion was daily gaining ground. Its numbers increased to such a degree that the State religion was seriously affected. Upon this development the people demanded more severe penalties against this hated race. Mobs threatened to take the matter in their own hands if their demands were not met officially.

4. Trajan's Legislation.

The answer to the growing menace of Christianity was the legislation of Trajan. It was occasioned by a letter sent to the Emperor by Pliny the Younger, Proconsul of Bithynia in the year A.D. 111 or 112. (7) There were a large number of Christians in the province and the governor could not decide what was the best way to deal with them. So he sent a letter to the Emperor with these questions: (1) Shall we send police after Christians? (2) What is the ground of action? Is it the Name? (3) Are extenuating circumstances to be taken into consideration? (4) What is the legal value of repentance? (5) Shall anonymous indictments be recognized?

These questions grew out of the experiences which the governor had with Christians who appeared before his tribunals. Some of those who were arrested denied that they

(7) Ayer - Source Book for Ancient Church History. pp. 20, 21, 22.

against it and as first laid down. The President of United-
States differed with the different governments. But the new
relation was daily strengthening. The amount invested
to such a degree that the United States was actually in-
terested. Then this development the people demanded was
more serious than against it in total. Some threatened
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not met officially.

4. The United States

The answer to the growing number of Christians was the
establishment of a treaty. It was concluded in a later year
in the year 1911 by which the United States, through the
in the year 1911, (1) There was a large number
of Christians in the United States and the government could not do
else what was the best way to deal with them. So he sent
a letter to the Emperor with these questions: (1) Shall we
send missionaries after Christians? (2) What is the ground of
mission? Is it the Bible? (3) Are missionaries missionaries?
to be taken into consideration? (4) What is the legal value
of missionary? (5) Will missionary missionaries be taught

These questions were put to the government with the
government and the Christian who accepted before his
people. Some of those who were interested in the
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44) (45) (46) (47) (48) (49) (50) (51) (52) (53) (54) (55) (56) (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62) (63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80) (81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89) (90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98) (99) (100)

were Christians. Others said that they had been Christians but were no longer. In order to test the accused the governor ordered images of the Emperor and of the gods to be placed before them. They were then commanded to offer incense to these images and to curse Christ. Those who obeyed were set at liberty. Those who refused to obey were executed. But Pliny wished to have the official sanction of the Emperor in this matter.

In his letter to Trajan Pliny also described the actions of Christians. He said that they held meetings before daylight, sang hymns to Christ as divine, and bound themselves by solemn vows to avoid every wicked thing, and to keep every trust. After this meeting they met to partake of ordinary and decent food. "These facts had been learned from two deaconesses under torture", said the governor.

In his reply, Trajan gave general approval to the conduct of Pliny thus far and gave the following answers to his questions: (1) Christians should not be sought by the police. (2) Christians must be punished for the Name itself. (3) Exterminating circumstances must be taken into consideration. (4) Those who denied that they were Christians and proved it by sacrificing to the gods were to be pardoned. (5) Anonymous indictments were not to be recognized since such an act would be unworthy of the age.

These imperial decrees are significant in that they reveal the natural development of State opposition. During the Neronian persecution Christians were condemned as "haters of humanity" or for some misdemeanor. In the time of Trajan however it was distinctly laid down for the first time that to be a Christian was in itself a capital crime. Henceforth, Christians were condemned "for the Name" alone. This legislation under Trajan regulated the treatment of Christians for more than a century.

But persecution did not have the power to stop the growth of the Christian faith movement. Christians showed themselves "a people always prepared to die". They endured their fate calmly and with the assurance of an inner victory. This inner victory was matched with an even greater outward victory since the new faith continued to advance regardless of what its enemies did to stop it. In one of his epistles St. Peter gives this sound advice : "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or a busy-body in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed".(8) This admonition certainly was never forgotten by Christians throughout their persecutions.

(8) I Peter 4:15,16.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIANITY AND HERESY.

1. Christianity Maintains Its Individuality by
Outlawing Heretical Sects.

The internal conflict of the early Church with heretical sects was even more dangerous to its welfare than were the great persecutions. The conflict was made possible on account of the absence of norms of faith in the Church. Certain requisites of the new faith were not universally recognized as true or important. Also, many had embraced the new religion without catching its true spirit. People were inclined to interpret the new faith on the basis of their earlier training, philosophical and religious. This gave rise to many divergences in belief and teaching. These discordant interpretations represent the heretical movements of the second century. The conflict between the Christian faith and heresy was all the more dangerous because the latter contained many elements which were distinctly Christian. But the conflict served a good purpose in that it helped to establish the true Church on the generally accepted Christian tradition. It served a good purpose in effecting a greater uniformity of doctrine and belief which was so essential to the life and progress of the early Church. Moeller states the beneficial result of the conflict to the Church in these words: "The church (was) com-

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pelled to gather itself together more strigently, on a more definite foundation than heretofore, and to secure itself against falling away into discordant opinions and the dissolution of the firm stability of the community". (1)

2.Gnosticism.

Gnosticism is a generic name for a number of syncretistic religious systems. The movement originated before the Christian era. With the appearance of Christianity the movement received a new impetus. It moved from the East to the West and absorbed many of the concepts in Greek philosophy and Christianity as it went. Gnosticism did not present any problem to the Church until the former became greatly influenced by Christian elements. The intermingling tendency continued until the confusion was so great that many who were nominally within the Church held to the doctrines of Gnosticism.

There was a tendency among the Gnostics to form little groups and to keep much of their teaching secret from those who were attracted by the popular aspects of Gnosticism. In these secret groups the fanciful and mythological elements in Gnosticism appear. It was this part of the Gnostic system which their opponents attacked most vehemently.

Gnosticism was extremely complex because of the many elements entering into it. Greek philosophy, mystery cults,

(1) Moeller - History of the Christian Church. p.154.

mysticism, oriental speculation, and Christianity all exerted an influence in the Gnostic system.

Heresy is as old as the Gospel itself. The early Christian leaders bear witness in their writings to the prevalence and influence of heretical thought. Such writings as the Epistle of St. Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and Apocalypse, the Epistles of St. Peter, of St. Jude, and of St. Ignatius refer to the Gnostic teaching. These writings disclose three doctrines which the Christians had to guard against; namely, that neither Nature nor Law are the products of a perfect God, but of inferior spirits; the manifestation of the supreme God in Jesus Christ, and lastly, that the Christian must free himself from the influence of creative and ruling powers before he can draw near to God the Father.

These doctrines include Christian elements. This fact is the thing which makes them all the more subtle. The influence of Greek philosophy can be seen here. Philo had taught that God was above perfection and definition and matter did not emanate from God but from lesser beings, some of which were imprisoned in tangible bodies. God stands apart from the world and has connection with it only through inferior powers.

Gnosticism first appeared in Samaria, the ancient enemy of Jerusalem. In this area, Simon, the man who was convert-

ed by Philip and who offered to purchase the power to perform the miracles of the disciples, was preaching his special doctrines. He taught that the Supreme Power took the form of angels in order to avoid recognition in his journey through the world. This perfect being finally assumed human form in Jesus who, in appearance, suffered pain but who, in reality, did not. The Supreme Power appeared in the form of a man without being a real man.

Simmon's teachings foretell the real basis of the Gnosticism which spread over all of Christendom. He taught an abstract God, and a world created by inferior celestial beings. He also suggests the female pairs of the Valentinian system. He, himself, was the incarnation of the Supreme Power and the First Thought of the Supreme Power was Helen. The angels were the creation of this First Thought and the angels, in turn, created the world.

From Samaria Gnosticism made its way to Egypt. At Alexandria some of the gnostics sects took root and survived as late as the fourth century. The names of Basilides, Valentinus, and Carpocrates are associated with Alexandrian Gnosticism. These heresies appeared during the time of Hadrian (117-138 A.D.)

Of the three systems that of Valentinus is the most important because it was the most widespread; This system Irenaeus refuted vigorously.

as by Philip and who wished to witness the power of the
from the elements of the discipline, and respecting the ques-
the discipline. He thought that the system would work the
two to which he came to with satisfaction in his journey
through the world. This matter being finally decided, he
went forth in peace and, in accordance, returned with the
in reality, this was. The discipline was applied in the
form of a new system during a long time.

At home's discipline, the total results of the disci-
pline which were given at Christendom. He taught an
abstract God, and a world created by inferior beings, re-
fined. He also taught the false value of the religious
system. He, himself, was the incarnation of the system.
He was the first thought of the system, and the first
The results were the creation of this first thought and the
world, in fact, created the world.

From the discipline which was in use in Egypt. At Al-
exandria some of the greatest works were done and survived
as late as the fourth century. The name of Jacobus
Alexandrinus, and his works are associated with Alexandria.
Origen. These writings are dated during the time of
Constantine (312-337 A.D.)
In the first century of the Christian era the first la-
mentary system is seen in the world. This system
was called Platonism.

The Valentinian system is throughout a nuptial Gnosticism. It consists of a series of marriages and generations. At the head of all things is the Supreme Being, the Father who is the Abyss. With him is his companion Sige. In the course of time the Father desired to produce other beings. So Sige is impregnated. Two offspring are born, Intellect and Truth. Their relation to each other is as the relation of the Father to Sige. To Intellect and Truth were born Word and Life and to Word and Life were born Man and the Church. These represent the company of eight higher aeons, the Ogdoad.

But the process does not stop here. Word and Life give birth to five other couples and Man and the Church give birth to six. At this point in the development there are thirty aeons, fifteen males and fifteen females. This company is divided into three groups the Ogdoad, the Decad, and the Dodecad. These three groups make up the perfect society of beings, called the Pleroma.

But the harmony of this process is broken. When the transition is made from the abstract to the visible there is trouble. Will and Wisdom are the lowest in rank in the whole Pleroma. Wisdom becomes fired with an uncontrollable passion to know the Supreme Being, the Abyss. Under the influence of this great passion Wisdom gives birth to an illegitimate being which, in its very essence, is imperfect.

The name of this being is Hachamoth, or the Desire of Wisdom. Hachamoth is expelled from the Pleroma.

To restore harmony among the aeons Intellect and Truth produce a sixteenth pair, Christ and the Holy spirit. These two beings teach all the others to respect their own limitations and not to try to comprehend the great incomprehensible, the Abyss. Then in a burst of gratitude to the Supreme Father, all the aeons combine their powers and perfections to produce the thirtythird aeon, Jesus, the Saviour.

Two visitors from Pleroma were sent to Hachamoth. They were Christ who gave some form to matter and Jesus who produced psychic animate substance. Both inanimate and animate matter proceed from Hachamoth with the help of Christ and Jesus. Then, Hachamoth gave birth to a third substance, the spiritual.

Out of these three substances the inferior world, Kenoma, is to be made. The Creator, Demiurge, is formed by Hachamoth out of animated substance. Demiurge is not a creator in a real sense because he did not create the substance out of which his beings were made. Demiurge is the creator of all animate or material beings and king over them. Yet his position is inferior to Hachamoth because Hachamoth bears the same relation to the inferior world that the Supreme Being bears to the superior world.

In this Gnostic system there are three classes of men, the material, the psychic, and the spiritual. The material men are incapable of salvation. The psychic men are capable of salvation but cannot attain it by their own labor alone. They must have divine help. The spiritual men have no need of salvation. They have the spark of the spiritual and, therefore, are the "elect" of the human race.

Humanity will come to an end when the creative power of the Demiurge has been exhausted. Hachamoth, then, will go into Pleroma to become the spouse of Jesus, the Saviour. The spiritual men will go with Hachamoth into Pleroma to marry the angels of the Saviour. Demiurge will then take Hachamoth's place and the psychic men the place of the spiritual men. The material men will be destroyed.

In the language of Valentinus the spiritual men represent the ordinary Christian and the material men represent the non-Christian.

The Valentinian system is an elaborate affair which certainly must have been very satisfying to his followers. He taught that the spirit of the Valentinian was free from his flesh and, therefore, his acts were of no moral consequence. In the other world Valentinus promised deification to his followers.

The Christology of heretics is the only clearly defined part of their system. It is a Docetic Christology. In

reply to them Ignatius writes: "Become deaf when anyone speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, the descendant of David, the son of Mary, who was truly born, did eat and drink, and who was truly persecuted under Pontious Pilate, and truly crucified: who truly died in the sight of heaven, earth and hell, who was truly raised from the dead by the power of his Father".

The various Gnostic systems differed in many respects. Duchesne observes certain fundamental conceptions common to all of them.(2)

1. The Creator and Law-giver of the Old Testament is not the true God. Above him is the Father-God who is the supreme First Cause of all being.
2. The God of the Old Testament did not know the True God. Men lived in ignorance until Jesus Christ appeared who proceeded from the True God.
3. Between the True God and creation are many beings, divine in their origin. There is a disruption at some point in the scale and this breaks up the harmony.
4. There are some elements capable of redemption in humanity.
5. Because there can be no real union between divinity and matter, the passion and the resurrection of Christ are not real.

If Gnosticism had won over Christianity the latter would have been broken up into a multitude of sects which in turn would have melted away in the chaos of religions which characterized this age. Christianity would have lost

(2)Duchesne - History of the Christian Church. Vol I. ¹²⁷pp128.

its very essence and the distinctive characteristics between it and heathenism would have vanished.

But Christianity did not fail. In sober earnestness and childlike faith, the Church stood upon the simple Christian doctrine of the Apostles.

3. Marcionism.

Gnosticism created a lot of confusion in the early Church. Many were unable to distinguish between the true teachings of the Gospels and the apostolic tradition on the one hand and teachings which were considered heretical on the other. Into this confusion came a man whose aim was to reduce the Christian faith to a few simple and understandable doctrines in harmony with those of ordinary men. That man was Marcion.

About the year 140 A.D. he went to Rome and associated himself with the congregation of the faithful. But his beliefs soon began to disturb the community of believers. The leaders of the Church demanded that he state his faith explicitly so that other believers would know where he stood. It is reported that he gave a large sum of money to the community which, in all probability, was intended to conciliate public opinion.

Marcion was strongly anti-Jewish. This was partly due to the fact that he was a disciple of St. Paul. Only he went further than Paul in rejecting Judaism and the Old

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Noted an extremely anti-Jewish. This was early on
to the fact that he was a disciple of St. Paul. Only he
went further than Paul in rejecting Judaism and the Old

Testament. He held that it is impossible to reconcile the Creator-God of the Old Testament with the Redeemer-God of the New Testament. Therefore, the Old Testament and its teaching must go. "You must not", said he to the Roman presbytery, "pour new wine into old bottles, nor sew a new piece upon a worn-out garment". Thus his doctrine was dualistic as were those of the Gnostics.

The Redeemer, according to Marcion, was the manifestation of the only true God. But He was not human; he had only the semblance of humanity. If He were truly human He would stand in direct relation to the Creator-God of the Old Testament. Jesus had neither birth nor growth. He was human only in appearance.

He taught that not all men could be saved. Salvation came only to those who lived a strictly ascetic life, both in eating and in one's relation to the outside world. Marriage was forbidden and only those married people could receive baptism who agreed to separate.

There was much inconsistency in his doctrines and, instead of simplifying matters for the early Church, he only made for more confusion. He did not feel obliged to explain everything in his system to those who questioned him and was content to leave it in an atmosphere of mystery.

When he became convinced that the Church at Rome would not follow him, he broke away from it and founded one of his

Testament. He said that it is impossible to reconcile the
 Greater-God of the Old Testament with the Father-God of
 the New Testament. Therefore, the Old Testament and the
 Jewish God. "You must not," said he to the women
 present, "think now with your old ideas, but see a new
 vision upon a new-out garment." Thus the doctrine was
 familiar to us were those of the Gnostics.

The Redeemer, according to his vision, was the manifest-
 ation of the only true God. But he was not human; he had
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When he became convinced that the Church at Rome would
 not follow him, he broke away from it and founded one of his

own. This was in 144 A.D. The Marcionite community grew rapidly and within a short time spread throughout Christendom.

The Marcionite Churches rejected all of the Old Testament and most of what now comprises our New Testament. They accepted only the third Gospel and the writings of St. Paul, excluding the Pastoral Epistles. This was probably the first attempt to form an authoritative collection of New Testament writings. The Marcion movement continued into the fifth century.

Walker states that the "movement was probably the most dangerous of those associated with Gnosticism. He (Marcion) sundered Christianity from its historic background as completely as had the more speculative Gnostic systems". (3) The early Church was right in excommunicating Marcion and declaring the whole movement connected with him heretical. Marcionism was contrary to a very fundamental truth accepted by the Christian Church that the Redeemer-God of the New Testament was also the Creator of the physical world. Furthermore, the doctrine that Jesus had only the semblance of humanity, if allowed to persist in the early Church, would have undermined the new faith in its very origin and essence. The Christian faith movement once more asserted its individuality by rejecting Marcionism.

(3) Walker - History of the Christian Church. p.57.

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and this was in 1844. The Methodist community grew
rapidly and within a short time reached throughout Christian-

dom.

The Methodist Church has rejected all of the Old Testa-
ment and most of what now constitutes our New Testament. They
accepted only the birth of Jesus and the writings of St. Paul,
excluding the historical Jesus. This was probably the first
attempt to form an unorthodox collection of New Testament
writings. The Methodist movement continued into the 19th
century.

Walter states that the movement was probably the first
departure of those associated with Unitarianism. He (Walter)
understood Christianity from the historic perspective as con-
sisting of two main elements: (1) the historic Jesus and
the early Church was right in its understanding of Jesus and
declaring the world's movement centered with his historical
personality and continuity in a very fundamental truth accepted
by the Christian Church and the Fatherhood of the Son.
The movement was also the Father of the physical world. But
therefore, the doctrine that Jesus and only the movement of
humanity, if others are present in the early Church, would
have understood the age itself in its very origin and essence.
The Christian faith movement was not rejected in its
diversity by rejecting Unitarianism.

CONCLUSION.

The Roman Empire was good soil for the seeds of Christianity. There was a longing in the hearts of multitudes of people for redemption, assurance, and hope; elements which could not be found in Greek speculation and the various heathen religions. Religion in the Empire had lost its spirit and power. Attempts to revive the old systems proved futile. But the new faith had both spirit and power. By its very nature, then, the Christian religion was bound to draw people unto itself. Furthermore, the Roman Empire represented a form of universalism which was a necessary precedent to the universalism of the Gospel. It was a political universalism which had come into existence through the influence of the Roman State. It represented a step in the direction of a world-view not out of harmony with the Christian idea of a Kingdom of God embracing all nations. Such a thing would have been unintelligible to a Greek or a Roman before the development of the Empire.

The Founder of the Christian faith was One in whose personality were unsearchable riches. He taught a great deal about faith in God as a heavenly Father and love toward one's fellowman. And He lived all that He preached. One of the most impressive events connected with the life of Jesus is the fact of His resurrection after having been crucified. The hopes and aspirations of the disciples died out when

CONCLUSION

The Roman Empire was good soil for the seeds of Christianity. There was a longing in the hearts of millions of people for redemption, assurance, and happy afterlife which could not be found in Greek religion and the various heathen religions. Religion in the Empire had lost its spirit and power. Attempts to revive the old systems proved futile. But the new faith had both spirit and power. By its very nature, then, the Christian religion was bound to draw people unto itself. Furthermore, the Roman Empire represented a form of universalism which was a necessary antecedent to the universalism of the Gospel. It was a political universalism which had come into existence through the influence of the Roman state. It represented a step in the direction of a world-view not out of harmony with the Christian idea of a Kingdom of God embracing all nations. Such a thing would have been unthinkable to a Greek or a Roman before the development of the Empire.

The founder of the Christian faith was One in whose personality were unnumberable riches. He taught a great deal about faith in God as a heavenly Father and love toward men's fellowmen. And he lived all that he preached. One of the most impressive events connected with the life of Jesus is the fact of his resurrection after having been crucified. The hopes and aspirations of the disciples died not when

their Master drew His last breath on the Cross. But their hopes were soon revived. Three days later the disciples were convinced that Jesus was alive again. Out of this conviction came the impulse to carry the message of Jesus to those who had never heard of Him.

The dynamic behind the whole Christian faith movement and the thing that differentiated it from all other religions was the marvelous discovery that God was in Christ. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself", testified the Apostle Paul. This was the experience of the early Christians. They found God through the medium of Jesus Christ. Paul was able to declare the "unknown god" to the Athenians. Furthermore, all who followed Jesus had the experience of entering into a new life. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature". The historical individuality of the Christian faith movement is to be found in these two considerations.

For this obvious reason Christianity could not be contained within Judaism. The Jewish authorities looked upon Jesus as a false Messiah and altogether deserving of His ignoble death on the Cross. Jesus was not the kind of a Messiah they had expected. The Jews expected a temporal kingdom; Jesus' Kingdom was spiritual. Their religion was nationalistic; the Gospel was universal in its nature and application. Judaism was formal and legalistic; the

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was nationalistic; the Gospel was universal in its nature
and its location. Judaism was territorial and legalistic; the

religion of Jesus was ethical and spiritual. The rupture between Judaism and Christianity was inevitable.

The chief exponent of Gentile Christianity was St. Paul. Through three hazardous missionary journeys he carried the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. His method was to plant the seeds of the Gospel in strategic cities from which centers the new faith could emanate in all directions. He successfully defended Gentile Christianity against the Judaizers at Jerusalem and thus won the first major conflict in which the Christian faith movement became involved.

Christianity spread rapidly. By the year 100 it was firmly planted in Asia Minor, Syria, Macedonia, Greece, and Rome. About the year 112 Pliny, governor of Bithynia, reported to Trajan that this new religion was greatly affecting the older temple worship. Several factors were conducive to the expansion of Christianity. The Diaspora, the political unity of the empire, and the process of religious syncretism are among the more important ones,

But the expansion of the new faith followed as a result of its very nature. There is an implicit universalism in Jesus and His principles. This Galilean is for the whole world. If the new faith represented such an important discovery as its believers claimed and as they had experienced it to be, then it is only natural that they felt a moral obligation to share that discovery with the whole world.

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ligation to share their discovery with the whole world.

To maintain itself the new movement had to have some form of organization. Consequently, there were apostles and prophets who preached the Word and deacons and presbyters who looked after the administrative side of the Church. As time went on and as the faith kept spreading, there arose the need of written documents. Apostles had to write letters in order to keep in touch with distant communities. Furthermore, Jesus did not return as soon as many had expected and it became necessary to prepare a faithful record for coming generations.

The clash of Christianity with heathenism brought clearly before the people of the empire the essential elements in the new faith which differentiated it from all the religious and philosophical systems in heathenism. Christianity was not merely another national religion to be tolerated, but a supreme and universal religion. It was not mere speculation, but ultimate truth. With the early Christians, their religion was above the State. Loyalty to God took precedence over loyalty to the temporal power. Consequently, they could take no part in Caesar-worship. In the eyes of the State this was treason, punishable by death. The exchange of letters between the Emperor Trajan and Pliny, governor of Bithynia, furnishes excellent evidence for the treatment of Christians by the Roman State in the first quarter of the second century.

to maintain itself, the new movement had to have some
form of organization. Consequently, there were meetings
and attempts to spread the word and persons and groups
began to look after the administrative side of the
movement. As this went on and as the faith grew, naturally
there arose the need of written documents. Letters had to
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names for coming generations.

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they would take no part in Greek conflicts. In the eyes
of the people this was treason, punishable by death. The
exchange of letters between the various tribes and cities,
however, of necessity, furnished evidence for the
attestation of Christianity by the Roman state in the first
century of the second century.

The internal conflict of the early Church with heretical sects constituted one of the greatest dangers to its future development. If the new faith had lost its distinctive characteristics under the pressure of false leaders who attempted to harmonize it with foreign elements, the spread of Christianity would have ended within a short time. But the Church successfully defended itself against the various Gnostic systems and, in so doing, preserved for future generations a Gospel of "good news" and a discovery of infinite value to the human race, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Accept it". That is the heart of the Christian faith movement in its origin and development.

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